

November 5, 2017

“Holy and Useful to the Master”

Focal Passage: 2 Timothy 2:20-26 (NASB)

Cross References: Romans 6:12-23; 1 Corinthians 15:58; Galatians 5:22-24; 6:7-10; Ephesians 2:8-10; 4:15; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 6:11; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Titus 1:1-11; 1 John 1:8-9; 2:15-17

Lesson Idea: We need to seek the cleansing of the Lord, so that we can be someone He can use for His honor.

BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN

Oct 29 Luke 12-13	Oct 30 Luke 14-16
Oct 31 Luke 17-18	Nov 1 Luke 19-20
Nov 2 Luke 21-22	Nov 3 Luke 23-24
Nov 4 John 1-2	Nov 5 John 3-4

Background:

Paul told Timothy to help people become clean and holy “vessels” that God desires to use for His work. He instructed Timothy on how to guard his own life and how to treat others as he taught them and corrected them.

2 Timothy 2:20-26

20 Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. 21 Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work. 22 Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. 23 But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels. 24 The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, 25 with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, 26 and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

DISCUSSION:

- v 20. What are the purposes of different types of “vessels” (NIV: *articles*) in a house? How are some used for honor and some for dishonor (NIV *special purposes and some for common use*)?

NOTE: from David Guzik, *2 Timothy*:

But in a great house: Paul just used the picture of God’s building (the solid foundation of God stands). Now he thinks of that building as a great house that has a variety of vessels in it – bowls, plates, vases, and other such things.

- V 21. What things do we need to cleanse ourselves from to be a “vessel of honor?” (see 1 Timothy 6:11; 1 John 1:8-9; 2:15-17) What does it mean to be a sanctified? How are we to be “useful to the Master?” How do we become “prepared for every good work?” (see 1 Corinthians 15:58; Galatians 6:7-10; Ephesians 2:8-10; 2 Timothy 3:16-17)

NOTE: from Guzik:

Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from the latter: The latter things are the things of dishonor mentioned in 2 Timothy 2:20. If we cleanse ourselves from dishonorable things, God will regard us as vessels of honor, sanctified and useful for the Master.

If anyone cleanses himself: Paul spoke about a cleansing that isn’t just something God does for us as we sit passively. This is a self-cleansing for service that goes beyond a general cleansing for sin.

i. There is a main aspect of cleansing which comes to us as we trust in Jesus and His work on our behalf. This work of cleansing is really God’s work in us and not our work. This is the sense of 1 John 1:9: *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

ii. But there is another aspect of cleansing which God looks for us to do with the participation of our own will and effort. Not that it is our work apart from God, but it is a work that awaits our will and effort: *If anyone cleanses himself.* This aspect of cleansing is mostly connected with usefulness for service, and closeness to God.

Sanctified and useful: Sanctified means set apart, just as much as there are certain bowls and plates that we use more than others, or are set aside to some honorable purpose, so some people are more sanctified and useful to God than others. They are more prepared for every good work than others.

We must never think that some Christians are better than others, or that some have passed into a place where they are super-spiritual. However, we must also realize that some Christians are more able to be used by God than others, because they have cleansed themselves, and made themselves more usable to God.

Prepared for every good work: We must not think of being usable primarily in the sense of serving in the church. God wants to use His people for every good work, including those at the workplace, the school, in the home, in the community. This happens as one will cleanse himself and set yourself aside to God as a vessel for honor.

There is a large sense in which it is left to us how we want to be used by God. We have the potential to be used as a vessel of honor or as a vessel of dishonor. According to this picture, we could be a gold platter in the house of God, beautifully displaying the fruit of the Spirit. Or we could be an ashtray or a garbage can in God's house. Your conduct – *clean or unclean; set apart to God or not set apart to God; useful to Jesus or not useful to Jesus* – really matters. It greatly effects how God can use you and will use you to touch the lives of others.

- V 22. What does the word “flee” imply? Why should we flee from “youthful lusts?” What does it mean to “pursue” righteousness? Faith? Love? Peace? (see Galatians 5:22-24) Why are “pure hearts” necessary?

NOTE: from Guzik:

But pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace: Cleansing can never be a matter of just avoiding bad things. It must also be the pursuit of good things. Therefore there are both things that we must flee from and things we must pursue.

- V 23. What would be considered as “foolish and ignorant speculations,” and why should we avoid them? (see 2 Timothy 2:16-17)
- V 24. What should servants of the Lord be like, and why? (see 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:1-11) Even though Paul is instructing Timothy about the characteristics of a pastor, how should these things be true of all believers? Why is it important for Christians to be “patient when wronged?” (NIV *not resentful*)
- V 25. How should we “correct” others? (see Ephesians 4:15)
- V25-26. Why should we correct others? (see James 5:19-20) How are people held captive by the devil? (see Romans 6:12-23)

NOTE: From Guzik:

Timothy must be **patient**. God's work often takes time. Sometimes we can see why it takes so much time, sometimes we can't – but God is not in a hurry, and wants us to learn how to patiently trust Him.

Timothy must be **in humility correcting those who are in opposition**: The gentleness and patience Timothy must have does not mean he is to never confront those who need to be confronted; but he must do it in humility....: Paul specifically told Timothy how to correct these opposing ones.

If God perhaps will grant them repentance: They need to repent, and this repentance will never happen apart from a work of God in their heart....

So that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses: Anyone who fights against God is deceived, and must come to their senses; repentance flows as someone comes to the truth in this way.

And escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him: Those who are in opposition to God's work, whether they know it or not, are bound in a demonic deception, and are doing the devil's work. They need to escape the snare of the devil, and God is ready to set them free. **Taken captive by him to do his will:** Paul spoke of those who serve the devil and those who serve God. There is a choice for every person, every Christian, who they will decide to serve.

To be a servant of the Lord – *a vessel of honor for Him* – we must be empty, clean, and available. If we refuse to empty ourselves, clean ourselves, and make ourselves available to the Lord, we will find ourselves captive to the devil in one sense or another.

APPLICATION:

- ✓ What do you need to “flee” from to be a vessel of honor to the Lord?
- ✓ What do you need to pursue?
- ✓ How do you respond to those who wrong you? How should you respond?
- ✓ Is there anyone that God would desire you to help gently correct? How would you respond to those who try to gently correct you?