

***“Paul’s Second Letter to Timothy —
Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth Demands That We Follow Paul — Part 1”***

Last Time: “Paul’s Second Letter to Timothy — Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth — That is Your Glorious Purpose and Privilege”

Review:

- ***The Context of That Challenge: False Teachers Abound!***

2 Tim. 2:14-15

14 Of these things put [them] in remembrance, charging [them] before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, [but] to the subverting of the hearers.

15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

- ***“... Subverting of the hearers”: This means to overthrow or destroy, literally taken. The Greek word transliterated is our English word “catastrophe”. Modern translations nearly universally use the word “ruin”. This is not as powerful in my opinion, or accurate. Peter uses this word to describe the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha.***
- ***This sets the context for the next verse and underscores how important that exhortation was as Paul saw it. Those opposing the Truth of Grace were many and the situation was dire — unless the Lord in his mercy ordained otherwise. Consider church history where we see this often — for God may indeed choose to overrule the intentions of satan’s servants. There are clear applications of this teaching today in the many dimensions of life, are there not?***
- ***Be diligent, he exhorts Timothy, to demonstrate his approval before God in advance. “Study” meant in King’s English in 1611 to work hard or to be careful and diligent... It will require “work” and more. It demands that one be a “workman”, or, one given over to this work as a way of life. Not an avocation but a vocation or calling.***
- ***The foundational basis of Right Division is the Dispensational Plan of God whereby God’s work among sinners is accomplished differently depending on his Plan. For example, the most easily recognizable dispensational distinctions are between Grace and Law (whether the Mosaic or the Millennial). All dispensational workings and quite***

essentially different. Living under grace and its eternal hope is different indeed from that the Kingdom Law teaches. So everything here is about how God is working and of course, working today, since in the past or in the future he may have or may be working quite differently.

- ***Grace, grace, grace. That is how God is primarily working today in this Dispensation of the Grace of God. Note that we must go to Paul for this teaching. He was the apostle of the Gentiles and also the administrator of the Dispensation of the Grace of God. For that reason we are to “follow” or “imitate” him and not one of the Twelve who were sent to Israel.***

Romans 11 draws the contrasts with the Law so very well:

Rom. 11:5-6

5 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

6 And if by grace, then [is it] no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if [it be] of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

7 What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded ...

- ***Those that do not Rightly Divide or Cut Straightly the Word wreck havoc by attempting to put law into grace and grace into law, as if the two could be mingled without destroying both.***

The issue here then is Biblical Truth, and the Truth of God, dispensationally considered.

Gal. 3:12* And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. ***This is what the Mosaic legal system demands. The objective of living out one’s life under the law is the detailed obedience required by that law — “live in them” is the language here. See Matt. 19:17 and Luke 10:25-29 for great contrasts. Living within the terms of a legal system means keeping the commandments, plain and simple. To repeat what the apostle wrote in Galatians 2:**

***Gal. 3:12* And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.**

- *Paul, then, in writing as the apostle of the Gentiles and as the one chosen by the resurrected and ascended Christ Jesus, writes in many places of the dispensational working of Almighty God which is our enabler under the Liberty of Christ Jesus and his empowering under grace.*
- *The Blessing of That Challenge: The Approval of Almighty God and the Blessing of the Truth of God*
 - *Those working hard at Right Division are promised God's approval. They are those that "... Study to shew themselves approved unto God, workmen that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Yes, all scripture is inspired and all is edifying. But not all is for our obedience for it is included in a love letter to someone else and not addressed to us who are members of the Body of Christ. Today the approval of God is our expected blessing for our diligence on Right Division and what that implies.*
- *We conclude our review with these words: NO SHAME, EVER!*

2 Tim. 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

- *We are offered a hope that has the power to deliver us for all shame and an expectation of disapproval. Amen, this is a present tense hope of future blessing as Paul instructed Timothy here in this letter.*

Our Outline for Today:

Right Division of the Word of Truth Demands That We Follow Paul:

- *We Must Begin with the True Doctrines of Grace, not Law*
- *Enduring the Enemy's Opposition Means Suffering as Paul Did*
- *Bearing Fruit as God Enables is Our Glorious Opportunity*

Introduction:

[READ] 1 Tim. 1:16 *Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. [this is a key verse I think. A "pattern" or "hyper-type"!]* *This is a good starting place for our study today...*

Today: Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth Demands That We Follow Paul:

I. We Must Begin with the True Doctrines of Grace, not Law:

- ***Many exhortations to do just this - as he follows Christ! And, no where does Paul exhort to follow Christ. He also does not ever quote Christ as he is represented in the gospels (with one possible exception). What does this mean? Christ taught Paul from heaven! The teaching was indeed heavenly therefore and constituted a new revelation since the Kingdom revelation of the prophets and apostles did not contain the sacred secret given only to Paul. So there is a clear division here. The prophetic message was not Paul's and Paul's was not the prophetic. The prophets, Christ and the Twelve taught and preached the coming Millennial Kingdom and the Law (first Mosaic, the Millennial) - Paul taught and preached the Dispensation of the Grace of God.***

These are mostly very practical exhortations to live like he lives suffering as he suffered. The word “follow” itself indicates primarily a practical kind of imitation. But in some cases much more is involved — his teaching, his doctrine. And this is so important, for teaching, doctrine, must precede our response, our practice. We see that clearly given in our next reading today:

[READ] 2 Tim. 3:10-12

10 But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience,

11 Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of [them] all the Lord delivered me.

12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

1 Cor. 3:10-13 [compare here where “imitate” is not used but the teaching, the doctrine, is the same]

10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

“... laying the foundation”: Buildings require proper foundations to be first laid. This is another way Paul through this analogy gets straight to the point he is making. His example started with his teaching. Much grace was shared with Paul as he preached, taught, and suffered persecutions untold, and that was the backdrop of his reference here.

1 Cor. 4:1 Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. [again, a practical exhortation but with profound doctrinal meaning. See, for example, also 1 Tim. 3:9 with its context, which is very practical indeed]

Here the “mystery” revelation given to Paul is on center stage. It is indeed “fundamental”. No “building” can properly take place apart from it. Note that there is no evidence at all that Paul was referring back to many hours of teaching the Corinthian believers about Christ’s earthly ministry as detailed in the gospel accounts. No, the foundational teaching was regarding the Sacred secret finally revealed through Paul. And that was all about the finished work of Christ and his glorious redemption fully accomplished.

1 Cor. 4:14-17 [imitating him in his suffering for Christ and the church, AND receiving his Doctrine]

14 I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn [you].

15 For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet [have ye] not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

16 Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.

17 For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.

There was a constant reminder in his teaching that he was “imitating” Christ as he had come to know him — in the heavens! As we read in 2 Corinthians Chapter 5:

[READ] 2 Cor. 5:14-16

14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

15 And [that] he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

16 Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we [him] no more.

So very much more could be added ...

II. Enduring the Enemy's Opposition Means Suffering as Paul Did:

Phil. 1:18-21

18 What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

20 According to my earnest expectation and [my] hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but [that] with all boldness, as always, [so] now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether [it be] by life, or by death.

21 For to me to live [is] Christ, and to die [is] gain.

- *Even "... though his death": Such words. Such power. The unbridled power of God's grace at work through a broken vessel.*
- *The exhortation is such a strong one, to never allow shame to enter in, as I said in our last meeting. Shame comes from our sense of failure regarding a sense of having "missed the mark" that a legal requirement, a "law" has imposed on us. The many adversaries and those that have believed their lies due to failure to "rightly divide" do not possess the word of the truth ... But those that have "used the word of truth" well do possess that precious benefit and its glorious consequence, NO SHAME! Praise God.*

We have seen how in many places in Paul's letters he does not use the specific word for copy or mimic but simply sets up himself as their example and his suffering is to be their example! What an encouragement this must have been as they also entered into suffering with Christ as Paul had. Let's look now into 2 Corinthians chapter 4, perhaps the greatest teaching on this subject to be found in Paul's letters. As he writes here his suffering was "in Christ" and therefore worthy of our emulation:

[READ] 2 Cor. 4:1-4

1 Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;
2 But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.
3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:
4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Paul's ministry was never hidden and always transparently clear and therefore powerful for sharing the grace of Christ. Those that could not see it were still blinded by "the god of this world".

[READ] 2 Cor. 4:5-7

5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.
6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to [give] the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

This analogy is so meaningful. Possessing the light of the truth of grace in an earthen vessel or clay pot that must be broken for the light to shine forth is so memorable. Remember Gideon!! What about our lights, our earth vessels? Are they breaking in order to openly display God's abundant grace?

[READ] 2 Cor. 4:8-12

8 [We are] troubled on every side, yet not distressed; [we are] perplexed, but not in despair;
9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;
10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.
11 For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.
12 So then death worketh in us, but life in you.

So we see it all come together so beautifully here in these verses. Do they call you forth into a more productive ministry of grace and truth, the Word Rightly Divided? I pray that they do.

III. Bearing Fruit as God Enables is Our Glorious Opportunity:

[READ] 2 Cor. 4:13-18

13 We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;

14 Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present [us] with you.

15 For all things [are] for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward [man] is renewed day by day.

17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding [and] eternal weight of glory;

18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen [are] temporal; but the things which are not seen [are] eternal.

- *How important are these verses? Well, their teaching and power cannot be minimized. I can surely testify to it, that for nearly 50 years they have brought tears to my eyes as I consider Paul and then myself in the light of his teaching.*

Conclusions / Application:

- *We live in days often consumed by challenges we had never dreamed of here in this land of liberty. While we were not looking, the enemy has come into the very tent itself of liberty striking against it at the root. Will the tree of liberty stand? May God deliver us from this challenge of our lives and may we be a part of his victory! Amen.*
- *Next Time: Some Imperatives! The contrasts with the Law are so great! But we need Paul to make them crystal clear.*

1 Cor. 11:1-2

1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also [am] of Christ.

2 Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered [them] to you.