



Teaching God's Word to Train Disciples

Fellowship BIBLE CHURCH

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Someone's last words are usually a very important thing to us.

Edgar Allan Poe, the writer, died. October 7, 1849. His last words were, "Lord help my poor soul."

Elizabeth I, Queen of England, died in 1603. Her last words were, "All my possessions for a moment of time."

Thomas Alva Edison, inventor, died October 18, 1931. His last words were, "It is very beautiful over there."

Harry Lillis "Bing" Crosby, singer and actor died October 14, 1977. He said, "That was a great game of golf, fellers."

Winston Churchill, statesman, died January 24, 1965. Before slipping into a coma, he said, "I'm bored with it all." He died 9 days later.

Jane Austen, writer, died. July 18, 1817. When asked by her sister, Cassandra, if there was anything she wanted, she replied, "Nothing, but death."

John Quincy Adams, US President, died February 21, 1848. His last words were, "This is the last of earth! I am content."

was and how they were to relate to him. The government had become corrupt. The Jews, who were God's people, were fed up with meaningless religion. We need to read the letter as if it were personally written to us.

PAUL'S GREETING

1. Paul was an apostle for Christ Jesus

2 Timothy 1:1, "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus,"

People who have no ear for classical music may say that it all sounds the same, but those who know music know the difference between Bach, Handel and Beethoven. In the same way, people who lack spiritual knowledge tell us that all the world's religions are really the same, and one is as good as another. So, it really doesn't matter which one you choose because they're all right. According to the bible, that is totally wrong. The person of Jesus Christ as seen in the scripture is unique. Paul uses here a description of the good news about Jesus which does not appear anywhere else in the New Testament. He calls it "the promise of life in Christ Jesus." There is life in Jesus.

No other religious figure has ever done what Jesus did. He healed the sick.

Act 10:37-38) "You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached-- how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him."

Matthew 4:23-25 "Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people."

The Last Words of the Apostle Paul

2 Timothy Part 1

The last words of the apostle Paul were a personal letter to Timothy, a young man who was his disciple. Paul lived in a time that was in many ways similar to our own. It was a very immoral, sinful time. People had many different views on who God

It is important to note that Jesus healed all. From Peter's mother-in-law's fever, to the blind, to the demon possessed, no case was too small, or too hard, or too undeserving for the Lord. He refused no one who came to Him for healing.

He raised the dead and even came back to life three days after his own crucifixion as he had promised. The Bible tells us that Jesus was the One God had promised through the Old Testament who would come and save his people from their sins.

Paul was in the worst conditions imaginable, and he knew that each day could be his last. But his mind was not on death. His mind was on life. Paul knew that the eternal life he possessed was far more real than the physical death he faced. His body may be put to death, but the life he had with Jesus would never end.

2. Paul discipled Timothy

2 Timothy 1:2, "2To Timothy, my dear son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

One of the most exciting races that can be run is the baton race where one runner hands the baton to another. That is what the Christian life is all about.

Each one of us are to be busy about transferring our faith to someone else. That is called "discipleship," and it couldn't be any more important.

Bill Hull wrote: "there is probably no other more primary matter of negligence in the church today that power failure to follow the lord's command to develop disciples. Because of this gross neglect, many Christians think of themselves as an audience to be entertained rather than an army ready to march. The first century church, composed of the tiny band of committed people, brought the mighty roman world to its knees. In the 20th century, however, it often seems that we who are many in the church have allowed the worldly culture to disciple us into its way of thinking."

If we are to be busy about god's work, then we will take discipleship seriously. Paul calls Timothy his "dear son. In 1 Timothy, he calls him his" true son in the faith." Not everyone that you try to disciple is going to be a true son. Not everyone that you hand

the baton to is going to take it and run. Some people are going to drop it when the going gets tough, and that is a very discouraging thing because you have poured your life into that person. You cannot let those who drop out of the race keep you from helping others who will finish the race. I believe that when we are at the point of death, and we think about what we have accomplished for God, it will be the memory of our disciples who bring us the most joy and comfort. Timothy was a young man who ran well and finished.

TIMOTHY'S BACKGROUND

1. Timothy grew up with a godly influence

There is nothing more important for shaping someone's life than the families in which they grow up in.

In their book, *The Search for America's Faith*, George Gallatt, Jr., and David Poland, closed their report on the poll results concerning family life in America with this word. "The general decline in the quality of family life is signaled by a loss of values, aimless wondering in the world of secular pursuits, and an almost professional consumerism." And then he says, "Spiritual values have long since eroded." We desperately need to recover the family as the place where the Christian faith is lived and transmitted from generation to generation. Timothy grew up with a Godly influence.

2 Timothy 1:3, "I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. 4Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. 5I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also."

Do you see the tie of generations here? Timothy had a Godly heritage in his grandmother and mother. Both believed in the true God, and they taught him the Scripture from time he was a child. People who have godly parents who teach them the Scriptures early enter the race much farther along than those who haven't had that privilege. The best thing you can do for your child is to teach them the things of God early and to model those things in your own life.

2. Timothy was not naturally a bold person

Most commentators agree that Timothy was a shy kind of person. He was not the kind of person who would naturally want to be in a confrontation with someone. That could have been used as an excuse to not fight the battle that was before him, so Paul reminded Timothy of some wonderful truths.

2 Timothy 1:7, "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity; but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline."

Verse 7 is a description of the kind of person you will become when God controls your life. Instead of weakness, you will have power. Power is simply the ability to do whatever God requires. You'll never be asked to do anything beyond what God will give you the power to accomplish. Instead of anger and bitterness, you will be a person filled with the love of God. Instead of going with the flow, you will have the discipline to do what you should be doing rather than what you feel like doing. You will become the kind of person who gets the attention of the world. They look at you and wonder how it is that you do it, and there is only 1 explanation-it has to be your faith in God.

APPLICATION: HOW CAN WE SERVE IN OUR GENERATION AS TIMOTHY HE DID IN HIS?

1. We must expect persecution

2 Timothy 1:8, "So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God."

We somehow hope that our Christian values will be acceptable to the world we live in, and that we won't have to suffer. That will never happen. Joe Stowell, President of Moody Bible Institute writes, "Jesus' rejection, alienation, and ultimately His crucifixion...were the direct result of the fact that Christ came to do His work in alien territory that was dead set against His success."

If we pattern our lives after Him we will face suffering for the same reason He did. We are living in enemy territory. In John 15, Jesus said, "If the world

hates you, keep in mind that it hated Me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world....if they persecuted me, they will persecute you also."

History has shown just how true Jesus' words are. During the years when Christianity was just getting started, Christians experienced unbelievable persecution for their faith. All but one of the first 12 disciples suffered a martyr's death and the other, John, died of old age in exile on the Isle of Patmos because of his commitment to Jesus. And that kind of persecution continues even in our day and age. In fact more followers of Jesus Christ are dying for their faith during this season of church history than in all the other seasons combined. About 150,000 each year are being martyred. About two million are being actively persecuted. And millions more are living with their religious freedoms severely restricted.

In 1994 in the southern region of Ethiopia, officials raided the area's largest evangelical church and arrested most of its members. It is reported that many members died in jail. They were not allowed to be buried; rather their bodies were left out to be scavenged by animals. The pastor was tortured and his eyes plucked out. Being a Christian takes courage! It is not an easy task. We live in a world that is totally foreign to the ways of Christ, and things are getting worse.

A noted historian, Joseph Haroutunian said: before, religion was God centered. Before, whatever was not conducive to the Glory of God was infinitely evil; now that which is not conducive to the happiness of man is evil....Before, man lived to glorify God; now God lives to serve man. It is in that kind of atmosphere that God needs people who are willing to stand up and be counted for him.

An old song written in 1858 by George Duffield, a Presbyterian pastor says it well.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus, ye soldiers of the cross;
Lift high His royal banner, it must not suffer loss.
From victory unto victory His army shall He lead,
Till every foe is vanquished, and Christ is Lord indeed.

2. We must deepen our relationship with God

This year there have been many bonfires out on our land, and there is always one thing true about of fire. It tends to go out if you are not doing something to replenish it. Sometimes, you've got to stir the wood that is already on the pile. At other times, it needs new wood. Whatever the case, fires need attention. That is what Paul is saying to Timothy. He is saying, "Timothy, God has begun a fire in your heart, but it is up to you to keep it burning."

Paul tells Timothy to "fan into flame" the gift that was in him. God gives to each of his children spiritual gifts, abilities that can be used to serve him and build his kingdom, but our spiritual gifts will not always be operating at the same level of effectiveness. If the fire in your heart is burning low, your spiritual gift may be barely recognized. I believe that is one reason why so many Christians don't know what their spiritual gift is. They are not close enough to God to be able to see it. We have probably all heard the expression, "he is on fire for God." That is exactly what God wants us to be-on fire for Him. According to Romans 12, God wants us to be fervent in spirit. And how do we stir the fire in our lives? Get around other people who have burning hearts. Attend a small group bible study made up of fervent people. If you hang around people who are on fire for God, some of their passion will ignite your heart. Without question, you must spend quality time alone with God.

II Chronicles 15:12 "They entered into a covenant to seek the Lord, the God of their ancestors, with all their heart and soul."

Becky Tirabassi is the author of *The Burning Heart Contract*. What is a Burning Heart Contract? BHC is a call to passion, purity, and great purpose. It is an agreement you make with God to spend an hour a day with Him for the rest of your life.

Becky says, "A Burning Heart Contract is your response to the living, loving God and what He is asking of you... With this contract you are saying, 'Lord, You are worthy of my total devotion, and I will live a life that honors You and displays Your faithfulness for others to see. I commit to this adventure with You for the rest of my life.'

She continues, "An hour! You might be thinking. What will I do for a whole hour with God? Besides, I don't have that kind of time! Do you have an hour to watch television? To talk on the phone? To eat lunch with your friends? "We make time for what we want to make time for," says Becky who has spent at least an hour a day with God for over twenty years during the busiest season of her life. "

Becky assures you that you need not wait long to see the awesome results of spending time with God. In fact, she will tell you that just one hour in the presence of the King is all it takes to get your heart on fire. Changed hearts and Spirit-filled lives are the result of prayer." God's Spirit wants to burn strongly within us, but we must make the commitment to take the time for that to happen.

I think the real question is what will it cost us not to spend quality time with God? Spiritually speaking, you will live out an average life that has very little impact on the world around you. Spiritually speaking, you will feel little if any purpose, passion, and adventure.

When the bullets are flying, we need every soldier to grab his gun and head for the front lines.

3. Understand that it is always too soon to quit

Lewis Smedes once wrote, "If you have a ship you will not desert, if you have people you will not forsake, if you have causes you will not abandon, then you are like God . . ."

When Paul wrote 2 Timothy, he knew life for him was almost over. Many people think he died within weeks of writing the book. He knows the end is near.

Never again will he preach to great crowds. Never again will he preach in Jerusalem. Never again will he preach on the streets of Corinth. Those days are gone

forever. After all that he had gone through and in the light of what he was now facing, Paul was still seeking to serve God by building the life and ministry skills of Timothy until he was executed. He just wouldn't quit.

If I'm guessing right, most of the people in this building today intend to follow the lord's plan for their lives more closely, one of these days. What we don't realize is that the clock is ticking, and with each tick, we lose a little bit of what we could have had.

No one lives forever. The mortality rate is still at 100%. Whether it is a great man like the Apostle Paul or a not so great person, the time will come when all of the opportunities will be gone. If you are going to follow God's plan, now is the time to begin.