Being Mindful of Thy Tears

Second Timothy 1:1 – 6
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~ If you knew you were speaking to a loved one for the last time, what would you say to them? Well, the apostle Paul was preparing to be executed as he wrote this death-bed swan song epistle to his spiritual son Timothy. Accordingly, Paul gave Timothy warnings and encouragement and, as always, he did so while pointing him in the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ. In this leg of our expedition through the entire Word of God, our Spiritual Safari is going to carefully and completely examine this second letter from Paul to Timothy. This epistle contains something that none of the other's do: a note of sorrow and sadness; but, even so, there is an overtone of triumph. Paul wrote his own epitaph, saying, *''…. I have fought the good fight of faith and have finished my course.''* See, a man's death-bed statements typically reveal a life's philosophy utterly detached from that which they have professed throughout their lives. That makes this final communication from Paul of critical significance; and I am going to get more personal in these next eight safari reports than I have before in this so-called Spiritual Safari.

Most credible fundamental conservative scholars consult the following probable, approximate time-line of Paul's life during his last years:

A.D. 58: Paul's arrest in Jerusalem.

A.D. 61: his arrival in Rome as a prisoner.

A.D. 61-63: no record of this time in Paul's life is included in the Book of Acts. This is the time of his first Roman imprisonment, and three years of one trial after another followed before different Roman senates, various judges and local rulers.

A.D. 64-67: likely his temporary release from Prison; and, during this time, it would seem Paul covered extensive territory preaching the Gospel

throughout the Roman Empire. During this time, Paul writes first Timothy and Titus, apparently, from Macedonia.

A.D. 67-68: his re-arrest and death; meaning Paul writes second Timothy immediately prior to his execution in Rome at the hands of the madman Nero.

There are twenty-seven people mentioned by name in the four short chapters of this epistle. I trust you will read these safari reports on second Timothy extremely carefully; because those mentioned will subtly reveal imperative tenets of truth. The two verses that set the tone for this book are **(1)** chapter two verse fifteen, which reads, *''…. study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth''* – and, **(2)** chapter four verse two, which reads, *''…. Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.''* These are key verses to consider in this epistle. Further, two keywords are ''*ashamed*'' and ''*endure*.'' However, There is one word that is emphasized above all other words; and that word is ''*loyalty*.'' It means loyalty to the cause of Christ in the days of apostasy. There is loyalty in suffering – chapter one. There is loyalty in service – chapter two. There is loyalty in the face of apostasy – chapters three and four; and the loyalty of the Lord to His servants, even in desertion – chapter four.

Apostasy in this epistle is like a dark cloud on the horizon. Today, apostasy has broken like a category-five hurricane over the church. Webster's definition of apostasy is: *total desertion of principles of faith*. Apostasy is not due to ignorance, friends; it is a heresy. Apostasy is *deliberate* error; it is *intentional* departure from the faith in disobedience. An apostate is one who knows the truth of the Gospel, yet rejects and repudiates the doctrines of faith. Here in second Timothy, Paul speaks of the ultimate outcome of Gospel preaching. The final fruition of our labor for Christ will not be the total conversion of mankind; nor will it usher in the Millennial Kingdom here on earth. On the contrary, there will come about an apostasy which will blot out *"the faith"* from the earth. There are two departures spoken of in Scripture. One is the rapture; as the true and living church departs by being caught up to meet the Lord in the air and, two is the departure from

the faith by organized religion in the world *after* the rapture of the genuine church body of Christ.

All of this is in complete harmony with the startling question asked by the Lord Jesus Christ in Luke chapter eighteen verse eight, *"When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"* The answer to the Lord's question is: ''*no*.'' This is *NOT* in keeping, of course, with today's false, modern social gospel – which expects to transform the world into a utopia by tinkering with social systems. These vain and overly optimistic ''*Kingdom builders''* have no patience with these doleful words of second Timothy. They sure aren't going to care for these safari reports; I can promise you that. In fact, they'll disparage me as nastily and quickly as they can dream insults up. Nevertheless, the cold hard facts of history, and the events of this present hour, demonstrate the accuracy of Paul. We are currently in the midst of an apostasy which is cut to the pattern of Paul's words in remarkable detail. We can all thank God that, although the visible church has entered the orbit of awful, *near* total apostasy, the invisible church is on its way to the epiphany of glory – in the rapture. Frankly, I wish the invisible church were just a little bit more visible; but that's another lesson from another section of Scripture.

Most of you dear readers already know I emphasize the Word of God to the inth degree; but, in this epistle, Paul is going to bear down on that point until the pencil lead breaks and the pages rip. True Gospel preaching is premised on one fact: the *TOTAL* and *COMPLETE* depravity of mankind. Without an understanding of the total depravity of man as a lost sinner, the Bible doesn't even make sense. Where education assumes that the moral nature of man is capable of improvement, Christianity assumes the moral nature of mankind is wholly corrupt and irredeemable. Whereas, education assumes an outside human agent can be instrumental in the moral improvement of man, traditional Christianity assumes that the agent is God Almighty; but, even so, the moral nature of man is never improved – it is exchanged for a new nature. It doth not yet appear what we shall be. That is very, very, very important to understand, friends.

Mankind is in a state that can never be saved by obedience; mainly, because man cannot render impartial obedience. Of course, man can never

be saved by imperfect obedience, because God only accepts perfection. So, His solution is for us to be born again by the grace of God. God's saving grace reaches down and saves sinners on the basis of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ – period. Human life can *NEVER* – EVER be transformed on any other basis. Liberal preaching from the pulpit in this connection goes out in three different directions: **(1)** popular psychology; which says ''*we shall overcome.*'' They emphasize positive and creative thinking. Modern psychology says mankind will go onward and upward forever. Well, popular psychology never got anyone anywhere **(2)** ethics; the ethical message says *''good is better than evil because it's nicer.''* These people only want the lesser of two evils. This liberal message of ethics is given by a mild-mannered man to a group of mild-mannered people who urge everyone to be more mild-mannered. There's really nothing quite as insipid; and this is the group to whom the Lord Jesus said, *''…. you're neither hot nor cold and I am going to vomit you out of My mouth.''* These are the ice cream float Christians we talked about in our last report. They are nothing but fizz, foam and froth; except they aren't sweet – and they aren't saved – they're as bitter as bitter can be. Then, there is **(3)** the social gospel; they preach an improved race-relation, pacifism, social justice – and it all boils down to Christian socialism with them, plain and simple.

Only when the Gospel of the death of Christ on the cross for our sins, and His resurrection from the dead according to Scriptures for our justification is preached – and accepted – do we become brothers and sisters in Christ. When that happens, we won't need to talk about race or heritage. Harmony cannot be created by forcing people to come together; that's pure idiot's talk. Only the truth and wisdom of the grace of God can bring men together who are, otherwise, from very different worlds. When we are brought together in the Word of God, then color, race, social standing, and background make no difference whatsoever. See, God created you and me from nothing. So, until we accept and take our place as nothing, God can make nothing of us. That level of obedience is the only message that will ever change or affect a sin-sick world in any way, shape or form, my beloved….

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,

2 To Timothy, **my** ***dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy,*** **and** ***peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.***

3 I thank God, whom I serve from **my** ***forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;***

4 Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;

~ So, this is a very important section of Scripture we have come to; and chapter one is going to present the *afflictions* of the Gospel. This introduction is very similar to what we have already examined in first Timothy; except in the first epistle to Timothy, Paul said he was an apostle by the commandment of God. Well, remember, the commandments of God reveal the foundational will of God; but not the *total* will of God. Here, we have the promise of life according to that which is in Christ Jesus. If you have not read all of our reports from first Timothy, I suggest you go back and do so now. The only possible way we can ever accept the gift of grace is by faith. If we don't believe it – we don't have it; because that would literally be impossible. The Lord Jesus Christ gives us eternal life when we trust Him as our Savior; and the Word of God is the only place we can ever find Him, too, friends….

5 When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands ~

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