

Apply The Word

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Message Info

Title:

Courage to Persevere

Speaker:

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Date:

October 22, 2023

Scriptures:

2 Timothy 1:15-18

Theme: Persevere in the fight against evil.

Introduction: Church history is filled with examples of men and women who have persevered in the face of great suffering and evil during their lives out of their dedication to Jesus Christ. Church history is also filled with apostates who have left the faith, often blaming the church for their troubles. Paul also faced these trials during his ministry, and we can learn much from his example.

We can consider Paul's endurance in the face of evil under 2 headings:

1. Persevere amidst opposition

Verse 15 expresses the opposition Paul faced. "All of Asia turned away" from him during his imprisonment. Two men in particular, Phygelus and Hermogenes, were singled out as ringleaders.

We also gain insight into Paul's relationship with Timothy. Paul writes, "you are aware" of these troubles to Timothy. Timothy was a true friend who walked with Paul through his sufferings and helped to carry his burdens.

We must not be naïve about the evil that people can do, even under the banner of being Christians. Wicked people may be seeking to tear down the church, and we must respond biblically (see next page).

We also need to expect opposition and not be surprised by it. By thinking and acting justly, we can support one another in our troubles and be genuine help and support to help one another to persevere.

2. Persevere in doing good

Scripture always presents us with a positive vision for growth in godliness. Even commands to avoid certain behaviors ultimately have a positive goal in mind. It also provides us with positive motives by way of the gospel.

Paul contrasts the faithlessness of the apostates with the example of Onesiphorus. This man persevered in doing good and 'bringing profit' to Paul and to many in the Ephesian church.

He risked his life and reputation in identifying with Paul and in that way was both refreshing to Paul and a blessing to his entire household.

Questions:

1. Do you ever cut yourself off from others in your struggles and sufferings? How is the Lord calling you to re-engage?

2. How is the Lord using you to encourage others? How would you like to grow?

3. What has it cost you to be faithful to Jesus?

Taxonomy of NT Animal Figures

Sheep—believers, genuine though susceptible

Goats—unbelievers, separated on Judgment Day

Pigs—unclean, dumb and unresponsive

Dogs—unclean, predators; enemies of God and his people

Foxes—cunning and deceitful enemy (Herod)

Wolves—false brothers, evil, predators; bent on destruction

Matthew 7:6 “Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.”

Matthew 7:15 “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.”

Matthew 10:16 “Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.”

Matthew 25:32–33 “Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left.”

Luke 13:32 And he said to them, “Go and tell that fox, “Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course.””

John 10:11 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”

John 10:26 “. . . but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”

Acts 20:29–30 “I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.”

Philippians 3:2 Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh.

1 Peter 2:25 For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

2 Peter 2:22 What the true proverb says has happened to them: “The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire.”

Revelation 22:15 “Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.”