

## Sound Doctrine 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 4:1-5

November 25, 2018

1 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly urge you: 2 proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching. 3 For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, 4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths. 5 As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully.

I'm going to start with a question. If I told you that what is happening today is predicted in the Bible, would you believe me? In 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy the Christian faith was under the threat of false teaching. The author begins with a warning against other teaching that is regarded as false and dangerous. As a consequence, he encourages Timothy to be persistent in sound doctrine.

I am immediately reminded of a seminary class I was taking and the professor mentioned a concept that piqued the interest of the class. As he was teaching the class he mentioned a problem that he called off centered theology. As we were reflecting on that, one of my classmates asked, "What is off centered theology?" His answer was not helpful. He said, "Anything that is not centered." He laughed quietly and we knew that he was joking. However, his response was about as helpful as looking up a word in the dictionary and within the definition is the word itself. It fails to explain what the meaning is. Then the classmate responded, "Well, what is centered theology?" And his answer was, "Jesus. Centered theology is the preaching and teaching of Jesus and the action that he took. What Jesus actually did." I take a lot of time to reflect on the concept of centered theology and I think it is important to make sure we stay centered on the preaching and teaching of Jesus and the action of what Jesus did indeed do.

Today's Scripture highlights the importance of sound doctrine which is Jesus centered theology. The author 1<sup>st</sup> and foremost acknowledges God and Christ. This is a matter of doing what is important - that is putting the Lord 1<sup>st</sup>. This is a good thing to do and a lesson for us is to always put the Lord 1<sup>st</sup>. The author provides guidance to Timothy. As such, it is guidance to us. It is not just guidance to Timothy, it is guidance to all Christians, all religious leaders, all deacons, all elders, and all pastors. The letter urges Timothy to proclaim the message and to be persistent in good times and tough times. The lesson that is derived from the Scripture is that it teaches us that we have to give our testimonies. All Christians are called to give their testimony. Never give up on proclaiming the word. The author provides further guidance. It is our responsibility to convince, rebuke, and encourage. And to do these with extreme patience. Too many times people lose patience. They encounter some sort of frustration and lose their patience and end up becoming lapsed. Well, if you follow this Scripture you will not lapse, you will remain faithful.

Then the author addresses what I think is a prophetic problem. I started the sermon with the question "if I told you what is happening today is predicted in Bible would you believe me?" 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 4:3-4 the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths (NRSV). The Scripture calls for sound doctrine in a contemporary society. There are two paths you can take. There is a choice to be made. You get to choose either believing and knowing the truth which is focused on

pleasing God or hypocrisy that lacks discipline and is catered to pleasing humanity and promotes views that are contrary to centered doctrine for personal motives.

The fundamental reality of the Christian faith is that human beings are made by God and are in a covenant relationship with God. We are drawn to God. One of the basic principles of our religion is to live a Godly life of devotion. The Bible is your guide, the Bible is your modus operandi. If you get a letter in mail that is written personally to you and you are charged to follow it to its fullest extent - then it is up to you. You have a choice to either follow the instructions of the letter or to disregard its contents. The Bible gives us sound doctrine and it instructs us to follow this sound doctrine. The choice is yours to either live a life as it suits you or to live a life devoted to the Lord.

Sound doctrine is solid doctrine that is based on the Bible. Sound doctrine stands in contrast to the teaching of people with questionable motives. Doctrine that is based on the teaching of people can take the Bible out of context and cater to the culture in order to suit the audience. Doctrine that is centered on the Bible is like a GPS that tells you where you are, where you are to go, and how to get there. It is accurate and precise. It is not swayed by human emotion. It does not change. It does not show favoritism and it does not discriminate.

I encourage you to encourage others to read the Bible on a regular basis. Don't just read the Bible but study it. Check what someone else says with what is written in the Bible. Get a study Bible and look up the references. Follow the guidance that the Bible provides. God gives us a wonderful gift of love - the gift of salvation - to get us back to God. The least we could do is to show our appreciation by reading the word, studying the word, and following the word. Stay true to sound doctrine. Be a guardian of the word. Proclaim the message. Be persistent with the utmost patience in teaching sound doctrine.