

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

## Scripture Informed Perseverance

2 Timothy 3:12-15

**Keywords:** Persecution, Endurance, Parenting, Scripture, Gospel

**PowerPoint Presentation included:** NONE

**SermonAudio Blurb:**

### I. Introduction.

- A. One of the pressing issues for anyone who reads the New Testament carefully is the reality of the need for perseverance.
- B. A basic outline of the doctrine.
  - 1. God will finish what He starts.
  - 2. God calls and draws people to Himself through Jesus Christ, and all who are called by Him shall never be lost.
  - 3. Though God will keep safe all who are His this is not without the responsibility of the person to continue in his faith.
  - 4. However, it is God who is at work in His people that causes them to ultimately persevere.
- C. Error comes in when we hold to point 2 (repeat) and 4 (repeat) without 3.
  - 1. It creates presumptuousness and carelessness.
  - 2. It assumes that we know more than we truly can ever know this side of heaven.
  - 3. It chooses to reject or ignore or diminish clear passages on our responsibility to continue in our faith.
- D. So how does a person persevere? How do we run the race faithfully to the end? How do we say with confidence that we belong to God and that we shall be saved?
  - 1. The answer is simple, we remain steadfast as we better understand and trust in what God gives us through the Scripture.
  - 2. As my title says . . . .
  - 3. Much counseling is simply because there is a lack of understanding or a lack of trust in the Scripture. We don't let it inform us of what is true and

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good and right. The result is that we are tossed around because we remain ignorant.

4. Example, if you don't know and understand Ecclesiastes then you will be confused as why things happen in this world the way they do.
  5. Peter tells us, "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you." (1 Peter 4:12)
  6. The Jewish leaders come to Jesus in John 10 and ask Him if He really is the Messiah or not. His reply is blunt, "I already told you and you did not believe me."
- E. My proposition today is simple. It is that as we grow in our understand and trust in the Scripture we shall remain steadfast in our perseverance.

## **II. Scripture Informed Perseverance (12-15).**

- A. First, we shall not be surprised when we suffer persecution (12).
1. We learned this last week, but it bears hearing again.
  2. It is through many tribulations that a person shall enter into eternity and the Kingdom of God (Acts 14:22).
  3. Jesus tells us that we will have many tribulations in this world but that we are to take courage because He has overcome the world (John 16:33).
  4. Barnabas went to Antioch to the young church. His message was to help them to remain true to the Lord (Acts 11:23).
  5. Have you settled this fact within your heart? Is it something that is still debated?
- B. Second, we learn that to reject godliness does not save us from suffering, it merely puts it off (12-13).
1. The lie that Satan will tell you is that persecution is bad, you should seek to actively avoid it. You should downplay Christ in your life. You should not seek godliness in Jesus Christ to be your reality.
  2. Pursue leisure and pleasure for their own sakes. Make them your delights and your gods. Safety is paramount, give up your freedom so that you might be safe.
  3. What he fails to say is that as you pursue evil it only draws you deeper and deeper into it until it overwhelms you.

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4. Those who fall away from the Christian faith seldom do it in one fell swoop; rather it is a slow process where sin is allowed to remain until it fully corrupts the person's faith.
  5. But though their life might be filled with many pleasures and amusements the end is damnation.
  6. So, in the effort to avoid suffering, they suffer nonetheless, now for all eternity.
- C. Third, understand as the faithful are persecuted the wicked increase (13).
1. (δὲ) Paul contrasts the life of the godly with the life of the ungodly.
  2. This seems so obvious but it is amazing how often that it is forgotten.
  3. Psalm 73 and 37.
  4. In Romans 1:32 Paul has listed the costs of rejecting God. People descend into all manner of sin and rebellion. Then he says, "and, although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them."
  5. Vs 13 tells us how Paul viewed those who opposed the gospel. They were "evil" and "imposters."
    - a. Remember that in this context he refers to those within the church who were not true followers of Jesus.
    - b. They looked good on the outside but were actually enemies of Jesus Christ.
    - c. They were the ones who had a form of godliness but denied its power.
  6. Notice also that the nature of sin is such that if left unchecked it brings you into greater sin.
    - a. Often we think sin can somehow be static and motionless.
    - b. But it isn't, it is dynamic and is ever working itself out to bring out more sin.
    - c. It seeks to overwhelm and destroy.
- D. Fourth, the Scripture allows us to grasp the insidious nature of sin.
1. These people are deceived and deceiving.

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2. Jesus said “A blind man cannot guide a blind man can he? Will they not both fall into a pit?” (Luke 6:39) Yet that is exactly what sin accomplishes!
  3. It comes through Satan, 2 Corinthians 4:4 and 1 Timothy 4:1-2
  4. It comes through the person’s own sin, 1 John 2:11 and 1 John 1:6, 8, 10.
  5. This is how Scripture then helps us.
    - a. It informs us of the will of God.
    - b. It speaks to what He calls His children to be and to do.
    - c. It promises great reward to the faithful.
    - d. And it promise righteous judgment to those who think that sin is a game that will not capture them.
    - e. This causes us to pull up short in our times of folly. We see the end, the deception is pulled away.
      - (1) Consider Proverbs 7:7-23.
      - (2) Proverbs 1:11-19
- E. Fifth, it teaches you to stand fast in the face of persecution (14).
1. Notice the term “continue.” It means to stay, remain and it is contrasted with those in vs 13 who “proceed” meaning that they advance.
  2. The difference between a true believer and a false one is that one remains and one moves on. The only question is where is the believer to “remain?”
  3. “The things you have learned . . . .”
    - a. The believer is taught and convinced of the truth of the bible and its message.
    - b. And it is there that they must remain.
    - c. The bible becomes the anchor point for the Christian and for the wise Christian the question must always be, “What does the Word of God say?”
  4. The gospel is one of the key themes in this little letter.

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- a. Paul told Timothy to not be ashamed of it but rather come and suffer with him in the gospel (1:8-10).
  - b. Paul explained that he was called by God to proclaim the gospel and it was the reason that he therefore suffered (1:11-12).
  - c. Timothy was to follow Paul's example of sound words, meaning sound doctrine (1:13).
  - d. He was expected to guard the gospel (1:14).
  - e. He was to entrust it to faithful men who would in turn teach others (2:2).
  - f. Paul calls the gospel "the word of truth" (2:15, 25, 3:7).
  - g. Timothy was to faithfully teach the truth (2:24).
5. And it is this that he in which he was to remain and not budge.
- a. Again, this becomes the cause for suffering because this world is opposed to the truth of the bible.
  - b. It will push and press and fight seeking some sort of compromise, some sort of capitulation to the desires of the world.
  - c. And all around us there are the husks of churches who did not remain in the truth. Near my home is one church that says "A place to grow in Christ" but it isn't. It long ago abandoned the Word and moved on. It defines in many ways the idea of having a form of godliness but denying its power.
- F. Sixth, it puts a premium on the need for sound teaching (14b-15).
1. Paul had just described people who were always learning and never coming to the knowledge of the truth.
  2. Here Timothy is seen as a man who learned and was convinced of the truth. Both are needed.
    - a. You can't become convinced of anything until you learn it. And that requires time, attention and care. To the one who is lazy regarding learning the Word of God the result is simply instability.
    - b. And learning is not enough. The acquisition of knowledge regarding the bible is good, but it is not enough.

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- c. You must be convinced it is true, it is sufficient, it is authoritative in all ways for you.
  - d. There is far more wisdom in a young boy who is convinced that Jesus is the way of life and salvation than the greatest of philosophers.
  - e. But do you believe that?
  - f. When you consider what the Word says are you embarrassed? (Give example of Elisha and the axe head)
  - g. 1 Corinthians 1:17-25 and Galatians 3:1ff.
3. This means you need to learn to be wise in who instructs you.
- a. Part of what convinced Timothy was the character and life of those who taught him.
  - b. He was able to watch Paul live out what he taught and preached. There was no hiding from Timothy.
    - (1) He would have seen the frustration and the anger in Paul when word came of those being led astray by bad and false teaching.
    - (2) He would have seen the pleasure and joy in Paul as he heard of elders and teachers who were following behind him and building up the people of God.
    - (3) How do you go about choosing those who will teach you?
4. For parents this means you need to understand your place in the spiritual formation of your children.
- a. Timothy had been raised on a steady diet of the Scripture from childhood.
    - (1) Refers likely to the tradition that at five years of age the children were to begin to be formally taught the Old Testament—which is what the sacred writings refer to.
    - (2) Obviously prior to that he would have seen the faith of his mother and grandmother lived out. The words of scripture would have been on their lips.

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- (3) But then there came a time when he was actually taught the Word.
  - (4) (Give our philosophy regarding both children and teens learning and growing in their faith.)
- b. A wise parent knows they must train their children in the Word for one key reason.
- (1) It gives them the wisdom that leads to salvation in Jesus Christ.
  - (2) This means you need to know it. What is your plan? What is the process you have established so that you might become wise yourself in the Word of God?
  - (3) We offer to you bible studies. We have a solid resource center that is filled with sound books that are designed the help you grow.
  - (4) What books are you reading right now? Which of them are related to growing in your knowledge?
  - (5) How often does your lips speak the Word in the presence of your children? Not just lecturing them, but just in the course of conversation?
  - (6) Is your house ordered along the lines of what the bible says should be proper in a Christian's home?
  - (7) Are you convinced yourself that in the Scripture is found all that you need for life and godliness?
  - (8) Are you convinced yourself that if you unleash the Scripture properly and lovingly into the heart of your child that it will have a lasting influence?
  - (9) Are you convinced that the power to convert your child (and you) is found only in the Scripture?
    - (a) Paul was not ashamed of the gospel because . . . .
    - (b) We know that Timothy's father was not a believer. Only his mother and grandmother.

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- (c) But that was not a hindrance. They faithfully taught their son/grandson. They raised him on the message of the Old Testament that was then fulfilled in Jesus.
- (d) No excuses, just faithful, faith-filled instruction.
- (10) Is it too much of a stretch to say that the greatest act of child abuse a parent can do is to withhold the knowledge of the Scripture from his children?

## **III. Conclusion.**

- A. My proposition in this sermon was that only as we grow in our understand and trust in the Scripture we shall remain steadfast in our perseverance.
- B. I made six points that were designed to help prove that point.
  - 1. First, we shall not be surprised when we suffer persecution
  - 2. Second, we learn that to reject godliness does not save us from suffering, it merely puts it off
  - 3. Third, understand as the faithful are persecuted the wicked increase
  - 4. Fourth, the Scripture allows us to grasp the insidious nature of sin.
  - 5. Fifth, it teaches you to stand fast in the face of persecution
  - 6. Sixth, it puts a premium on the need for sound teaching
- C. Beloved you cannot ever diminish the centrality of the Word in your lives.
  - 1. It will reveal to you the state of your soul without Jesus.
  - 2. It will bring you to a saving faith in Jesus.
  - 3. It will teach you to walk in a manner worthy of the gospel of Jesus.
  - 4. It will make you wise.
  - 5. It will remind you of the future reward that is kept for you in heaven.
  - 6. It will warn you away from folly and sin.
  - 7. It will build hope as you see the futility of this world.
  - 8. And in all of this you will learn to persevere and stand fast in the gospel.



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## Small Group Questions

- Why does sin, once chosen, never simply remain static, but always seek a greater hold on the person?
- Which is more dangerous, being deceived by another or by your self? Why?
- When and how does it become clear that you have not just learned but you are also convinced of the truth of Scripture?
- How can a church help the parents train their children in the Word? How can a church hinder this responsibility?