

# *THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST*

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

## **2 TIMOTHY, TITUS, AND PHILEMON LESSON 2 (2 Timothy Chapters 3-4)**

### **Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:**

*THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.* Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Kevin Pendergrass.

Welcome to the Gospel of Christ. In this lesson we are going to be looking at 2 Timothy 3 and 4, and will be dealing with the idea of how to battle false doctrine. When we look at chapter 4 of Paul's first letter to Timothy, we see that Paul warns Timothy about a departure from the faith that will take place, about how false teachers will come in, and about how people no longer will be sticking to the truth. Paul also warns Timothy about this in his second letter. He talks about how Timothy will have to possess much perseverance because persecution will come into the church, and he will need to be ready for that. From a worldly standpoint, we may look at 1 and 2 Timothy and see a lot of negatives. But Paul was not going to candy coat anything for Timothy. He wanted to let him know that if he was going to be faithful, these were the things that he would have to face. These were the things that he would have to do. Notice what Paul wrote to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:13. "But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." Paul said, "Timothy, not only is it bad, but it's going to get worse and worse." Paul therefore tells Timothy about how to battle false doctrine. If there is false doctrine in existence today, then we need to look in 2 Timothy and see how Paul warned Timothy and told him how to deal with false doctrine. We know that there is false doctrine today, just as there always has been. It is vital that we take the same commands and advice that Timothy took from Paul regarding how to battle false doctrine.

The first thing is that when false doctrine comes into the Lord's church, the way to battle it is to use only the Word of God. The Word of God is described as a sword. It is "the sword of the Spirit" because it is the Word that pricks people in their hearts. When people realize that they are doing something sinful, it is the Word of God that can change their lives. If we are going to battle false doctrine, we must use only the Word of God. In 2 Timothy 3:14-17 Paul reminded Timothy of this. He said that Timothy had grown up studying the Scriptures, and that they had made him wise unto salvation. We can know from the Scriptures what we have to do to be saved. The Word of God is what makes us complete. We can defeat false doctrine through the Word of God. So, we must use only the Word of God. That said, people today will claim that they use only the Bible. They say, "I am going to use only the Bible." But they twist the Word of God to make it say what they want it to say. We should never go to the Bible with our minds already made up and say, "This is what I believe, so now I'm going to go to the Bible to prove it." We should be saying instead, "I want to go to the Bible to see what I'm supposed to believe." We should not want to twist the Scriptures to our beliefs, but instead should change our beliefs to fit the Scriptures. That is what Romans 12:1-2 commands us to do. We are to transform ourselves through the Word of God rather than conforming ourselves to the beliefs and traditions of the world. We must go to the Word of God. Peter talked about how people would twist the Scriptures to their own destruction. In 2 Peter 3:14-16 he said,

“Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.”

What is Peter saying? He is saying that there are people who are unstable, unlearned, or untaught. They will go to the Bible and say, “See, look at what this verse says.” But when you read and study the verse, you wonder how someone could see such a teaching in it. The reason is that people do not really let the Bible speak. They are taking the Bible and twisting it to their own destruction. People today have the mindset that they cannot really use the Bible because Scripture is “of private interpretation.” This is the idea that a person might go to a certain verse and see in it something different than what it tells another person. That is not how the Bible works. Look at 2 Peter 1:20-21, where Peter explained that the men who wrote the Bible were moved by the Spirit of God. They did not offer up their own private interpretation. They did not receive information from the Lord, and then put their own spin on it. They delivered it just as they had received it. This is how we need to receive it as well. When we go to the Bible, we cannot say, “Well, I’m going to interpret it my own way. I don’t really like what the Bible says, so I’m going to have my own private interpretation.” We can all understand the Bible alike. From Ephesians 3 we learn that the mystery has been revealed through the Word of God, and that we can all come to the same understanding because of that. We can all speak the same thing and be of the same mind. The idea that Scripture says something different to you than it does to me is false. That idea is contrary to Scripture. We must use only the Word of God. Jesus had the mindset of saying, “It is written....” He did not defeat Satan (in Matthew 4) by snapping His fingers. He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. Each time He was tested by Satan, Jesus said, “It is written....” How did Jesus defeat false doctrine? He defeated it by going to the Scriptures. He used only the Word of God. If Jesus Christ did that, then we, too, need to do that. Who are we to try to change things if that’s how Jesus defeated false doctrine? That is the only way that we can defeat false doctrine—by using only the Word of God.

We also need to make certain that we are trying to do the right thing when false doctrine is coming into the church. There are some mindsets that we do not need to have. We do not need to have the mindset that says, “I personally don’t see anything wrong with it.” It is amazing that people can read a verse in the Bible that teaches a doctrine and not see it. For example, consider baptism for the remission of sins. In Acts 2:38 we are told, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.” It is very clear and very easy to understand. Yet people say, “I know what the Bible says, but I personally don’t see anything wrong with it if someone does not do that.” People are not going strictly by the Word of God any more. They are not using “It is written....” They are using their own emotions, and they are using their own personal opinions. When it comes to the Scriptures, my opinion doesn’t matter, and your opinion doesn’t matter. The only thing that matters is what is written in the Word of God. If we are going to battle false doctrine, we have to remember that we must use only the Word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit.

Second, if we are going to battle false doctrine, we must preach and teach the Word. In 2 Timothy 4:2 Paul said that we are to “preach the word.” You may ask, “What else would anyone teach or preach? Isn’t that a rather obvious statement?” It is (or should be) obvious. But a lot of times people no longer preach the Word of God. People are preaching other things besides the Word of God. People often give solely motivational-type lessons.

And even people today in the Lord's church have the mentality that says, "I have already heard that before." I call it the "I already know that" mentality. But when we come to 2 Peter 1:12 we see that the reason Peter was writing was to remind people of certain things. It wasn't necessarily to teach people something totally new that they had never known. Rather, it was to remind them of certain things. In the Bible we are reminded of a lot of things that already had been taught previously. In Galatians 1:6-10 Paul reminds us twice that even if an angel from Heaven tries to teach us anything other than the Word of God, we are not to receive such teaching. We need to get the "I already know that" mentality behind us. We may already know something, but we need to be continually reminded of it through preaching of the Word of God.

Hymenaeus and Philetus were two men who no longer were preaching the Word of God. They had started preaching their own opinions and preconceived ideas. So, in 2 Timothy 2:17-18 Paul said, "Their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some." Paul said that these men were teaching doctrines that were contrary to the Bible. They no longer were teaching the doctrine of Christ as 2 John 9 commands us to do. They were preaching that the resurrection had already passed. They were preaching, but they were not preaching the Word. Why is it so vital that we are preaching the Word? Romans 10:17 answers that. If we do not preach the Word, then we cannot have faith since "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Faith comes from God's Word. I've heard people say, "I never read my Bible, but I pray to God every day that He will strengthen my faith." If we are not reading and studying our Bibles, then our faith will not be strengthened because it is from God's Word that faith is derived. Hebrews 11:6 says that without faith is impossible to please God. Romans 14:23 says that whatever is not of faith is sin. So if we no longer are preaching the Bible, then we are not preaching about how people can develop a true faith in God. Today you will find a lot of preachers who no longer are preaching the Bible. I've talked with people who do not attend the church of Christ that Jesus built. They say that where they attend, their preacher would use one or two Bible verses. The rest would be a lesson that got everyone fired up, but it was more of a motivational lesson. It did not come from the Bible. They quoted outside sources, or used stories to catch people's attention. People would leave the assembly feeling great, but they did not leave with a godly faith because they did not hear the Word of God being taught. In Deuteronomy 31:11-13, and in Joel 2:16-17, we see that when the people came together to worship, even the little children were present. No one had a special service. Today a lot of religious groups have "children's hour" or "children's church." I'm not talking about Bible classes. I'm talking about when the church comes together to worship, and the children and some of the adults break off and go into their own assembly in another room to make worship more appealing to the children. We never read that in the Bible. In fact, according to 1 Corinthians 11, such would be condemned. In Deuteronomy 31:11-13 and Joel 2:16-17 we read of how the little children were present because they need to be taught the principles of God so that they can be trained in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord." We need to make sure that everyone is hearing the Word of God proclaimed. It should not be just a fun-filled, motivational lesson, but instead it should be a lesson that will challenge us and that is based upon the Word of God. If we are going to battle false doctrine, we must be willing to preach the Word.

Third, we also have to be ready to battle false doctrine all the time. In 2 Timothy 4:2-4 Paul told Timothy to "be ready in season and out of season." That is like Paul saying, "Timothy, preach the Word of God when people **want** to hear it, and when they do **not** want to hear it." In fact, when people don't want to hear the Word is when they need to hear it the

most. That is when they really need to be ready. In 1 Peter 3:15 we are told that we need to always be ready to have an answer. Peter said, “Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.” We are to always be ready to give a defense for the truth. Does that mean that we have to know every detail about every verse? Absolutely not. But we do need to be able to offer a defense for the fundamentals of the faith. We also need to be on guard and be ready. We need to be growing every day. Some people will say, “I’m not very good at knowing Scripture. I’m not good at memorizing or studying.” Yet those same people can tell you their favorite sports team, favorite player, the final score of a game, or the statistics concerning the game. Why? It is because they have sanctified that in their hearts. In their favorite television show, they can tell you all the characters or what happened in the last episode. But when it comes to the Bible, they say, “I’m just no good at remembering things.” That’s not always the truth. The truth is that sometimes we are not really sanctifying the Lord God in our hearts. We are not really putting Him first in everything we do. If we were, then there would be a place in our hearts for God. His Word would be engrained in our hearts. Why? Because we would love Him enough that that is what we are talking about. That is what we study. That is what we talk about instead of spending our time on entertainment or sports. It’s not that such things are bad in and of themselves. But when we spend more time on those things than we do on the Word of God, something needs to change. In John 17:17 we are told that we are to be sanctified by truth because God’s Word is truth. Just as we are set apart by truth, we also need to set aside truth in our hearts. We always need to be ready to give an answer. In Jeremiah 6:16 we find the mindset of some people today. “Thus says the Lord, ‘Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls.’ But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’” We must not develop this type of mindset—which says, “I know that I’m supposed to know the Bible and seek the old paths, but I’m not going to walk in those paths.” Let’s not have that attitude. Paul warned Timothy that some people want to have their ears tickled. Thus, some preachers no longer preach the Word of God. They are preaching in an attempt to tickle people’s ears. We must get back to having an answer, and to the best of our ability making sure that we give people book, chapter and verse for what we believe. We need to be ready “in season and out of season” to teach people. We need to be willing to stand up and say, “This is something that is wrong” when something incorrect comes into the worship assembly. We need to say, “This is unauthorized, and I am ready to give you a biblical answer regarding why that is the case.”

Fourth, we must never give up when it comes to battling false doctrine. In 2 Timothy 4:7 Paul said, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” Paul was willing to continue to fight until his last breath. Many people today say, “I’ve stood for the truth all my life. I’ve been doing this for fifty years. I’m in my 70s now, and I’m ready to retire. I’m ready to quit preaching and quit standing for the truth. I want to play with my grandchildren. I just want to quit doing what I’ve been doing for so long.” It’s the idea that says, “I’ve done my part. Now let someone else do their part.” We must understand that our part is something that we must do until the day we die. We have to continue to fight. In fact, the older we get the more we should have a desire to fight for the truth. It shouldn’t be the opposite. The older we get, the more we should want to fight and give all that we have to give. We need to be like Jeremiah. Jeremiah was a man who initially said, “I’m going to quit preaching the Word of God. I’m through with God.” In Jeremiah 20:9 he even said, “I will not make mention of Him, nor speak anymore in His name.” It’s humorous—as Jeremiah says, “I’m done with God!” Yet he then went on to say, “But His word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, and I could not.”

Jeremiah said that he could not hold back the Word of God because it was like a fire in his bones that he had to let out. That is the type of desire that we need to have. We should never give up when it comes to battling false doctrine. We must remember what the Hebrews writer said in Hebrews 12:1-2

“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

This is a very encouraging passage. In Hebrews 11, the writer had just finished a discussion of people of great faith. They had fought the good fight through many trials. Then he said that because of that, **we** must not give up. We must continue to fight the good fight. Why? Because we are surrounded by these people! We are surrounded by “a great cloud of witnesses who are on our side.” One of the great things about Christianity is knowing that we are not alone. There have been many who have gone on before us, and who have done what faithful Christians are supposed to do. That said, let us look to their examples and know that they are on our side. We must never given in or lose heart. Luke 18:1-6 and Galatians 6:9-10 teach us that we must never lose heart or give in. Judas, unfortunately, was a man who gave up. He lost heart and killed himself. He ended up committing suicide, and is now lost because he gave up. He did not “keep on keeping on.” But a man who did keep on keeping on is a man by the name of Job. He had lost everything, physically speaking. He lost all of his cattle and all of his children. His wife even said, “Curse God and die!” Those are not very encouraging words for a man who had just lost practically everything. Yet in Job 1:22 we are told, “In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.” Were there times when Job went through trials and tough times? Absolutely! But he never blamed God. We look at Job and think of him as a man who had patience. The word “patience” often is used when the word “perseverance” should be used. Job was not necessarily a man who had patience. He had patience, but what’s he’s best known for is his perseverance. No matter what Satan threw at Job, he continued to keep on. Nothing could stop Job. Why? Because he was faithful. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were three men who were unwilling to give in—even if it meant their deaths. King Nebuchadnezzar said, “I’m going to set up this golden image, and you must worship it.” They said, “Even if the Lord does not deliver us, we still will not bow our knees.” They were people who “kept on keeping on.” I once heard a man say, “There may be a time in America when we have to confess Christ in such a manner that our lives will be taken. I don’t think I’m ready for that.” That is a sad attitude because it meant that the man was not willing to die for Christ. Yet we must have an attitude that says, “I will keep on fighting the good fight, no matter what!”

Fifth, we need to remember that if we battle false doctrine, people will forsake us. We need to be aware that people will forsake us. In 2 Timothy 4:10 Paul writes of a man by the name of Demas who “loved the present world.” He loved the world more than he loved God. He loved the world more than he loved the truth. And because of that, he forsook Paul and Christianity. All forsook Christ when He was crucified. How many people were standing in front of Christ saying, “If you crucify Him, then you’ll also have to crucify me”? Absolutely no one! We will have people who forsake us if we stand for the truth and battle false doctrine. Jesus said in Matthew 10:22, “You will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.” He did not say, “He who endures three-fourths of his life will be saved,” but “he who endures to the end will be saved.” One of the worst things that people could say about us is that we have zero enemies. To say that is not a compliment. I’m not saying that we should go out looking for enemies. But Jesus had many ene-

mies. If we stand for the truth, then we, too, may be hated. There will be people who will forsake us. In Matthew 10:34-39 Jesus said that even our own families would forsake us at times. There might be times when standing for the truth will mean that there will be a division among our own family members or closest friends. We must be aware that people will forsake us if we are faithful. But we cannot let that keep us from fighting the good fight.

The last point I want us to consider is that if we are going to battle false doctrine, we must keep our eyes on the prize. In 2 Timothy 4:8 Paul said, "Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing." Paul was a man who kept his eyes on the prize. We need to remember our reward, and how it is eternal. Revelation 2:10 says that if we remain faithful even unto death, we will receive a crown of life. It is worth everything we might have to suffer. In Philippians 3:12-14 we are told to look forward to the goal of eternal life. In 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 Paul explained the mindset that we must possess if we hope to be successful in battling false doctrine. Paul wrote:

"Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Paul is saying that it is tough on us if we look only at the temporary. If we look only at the here and now, being faithful and battling false doctrine will be hard. But if we look at the things that are eternal rather than temporary, things in this life will be much easier to face. If we are going to battle false doctrine, then we have to follow the same principles that Paul described to Timothy.

Maybe you are not in the body of Christ because you are not a member of the church of Christ. How does one become a member of the church of Christ? We know from Matthew 16:18 that Jesus built only one church. In Acts 2:47 we read that the Lord adds us to His church. That means that we not voted in. We do not "join the church," as is typical of some denominations. The Lord did not build denominations. He built only His one church—the church of Christ. He is the One Who must add a person to that church. Whom does He add to His church? Only the saved are added. How does one become saved? It is by having his sins washed away in the watery grave of baptism (Rom. 6:3-4). If you have not obeyed the truth, we hope today that you will obey the Gospel of Christ.

**Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:**

*THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST* is brought to you by loving, caring members of the church of Christ. The McLish Avenue church of Christ in Ardmore, Oklahoma, oversees this evangelistic effort. For a free CD or DVD of today's broadcast, please write to:

***THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST***  
**607 McLish Ave.**  
**Ardmore, OK 73401**

You may call **580-223-3289**. Please visit us on the web at [www.thegospelofchrist.com](http://www.thegospelofchrist.com). We encourage you to attend the church of Christ, where "the Bible is loved and the Gospel is preached."

## STUDY QUESTIONS FOR 2 TIMOTHY, TITUS, AND PHILEMON (2 TIM. 3-4)

1. According to this lesson, what is the general theme of 2 Timothy 3 and 4?
2. What warning did Paul offer Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:13?
3. In 2 Timothy 3:14-15, what compliment did Paul pay Timothy?
4. Of what did Paul remind Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:16-17?
5. What important information is contained in Romans 12:2?
6. What problem did Peter discuss in the closing part section of 2 Peter 3:16?
7. According to Peter's comments in 2 Peter 1:20, how did the Scriptures **not** come into existence?
8. According to Peter's comments in 2 Peter 1:21, how **did** the Scriptures come about?
9. What is the important message in Ephesians 3:4 for us today?
10. In Matthew 4, when Jesus was tempted by Satan, how did He respond?
11. In 2 Timothy 4:2, what command did Paul give Timothy?
12. In 2 Peter 1:12 we find one of the reasons why God gave us the Scriptures. What is that reason?
13. We learn from Romans 14:23 that "whatever is not of faith is sin." What, according to Romans 10:17, is the ultimate source of faith?
14. According to this lesson, what did Paul mean when he told Timothy to "be ready in season and out of season" (2 Timothy 4:2-4)?
15. What does 1 Peter 3:15 command us to do?
16. According to Jeremiah 6:16, what does God want His people to do?
17. By way of summary, what is the main message of Paul's statement in 2 Timothy 4:7?
18. What important message is found in Hebrews 12:1-2?
19. In 2 Timothy 4:10 Paul wrote about a man by the name of Demas. What sin did Paul attribute to Demas?
20. What important point is found in the first part of Matthew 10:22?
21. What important point is found in the second part of Matthew 10:22?