

**- Order of Service -**

**Call to Worship**

**Welcoming Prayer**

**Reading Titus 2:11-3:8**

- 1, Holy, Holy, Holy
- Only a holy God
- 3, Holy God, we praise Thy name

**Announcements and Prayer requests**

- Communion and Pot-luck, Nov 5

**Greeting**

**Message in the Word -**

**Living in light of the Rapture, the Blessed Hope**

**Wolves: The dangerous reality of false teachers**

**2 Timothy 2:19-22, 3:1-12**

**Sending prayer**

**You may notice we don't pass an offering plate**

We invite you to participate in the ministry, and the offering box in the foyer is for your gifts and offerings for the Lord's work.

**- 2 Corinthians 9:7-8, Galatians 6:6 -**

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**- Teaching -**

**Eric Peterman**

**Living in light of the Rapture, the Blessed Hope**

**Wolves: The dangerous reality of false teachers**

**2 Timothy 2:19-22, 3:1-12**

**- October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023 -**

## Living in light of the Rapture, the Blessed Hope

### Wolves: The dangerous reality of false teachers

#### 2 Timothy 2:19-22, 3:1-12

We're continuing to focus on our life in Christ in view of the rapture, our Blessed Hope. Paul's final letter to Timothy lays out a problem that was a threat to the church in Ephesus where Paul had poured out so much time and energy, and where Timothy was now ministering on his behalf. It is a problem and a threat that has plagued the church in waves from the days of the apostles all the way to today. From the prophetic words of Paul here ("the Last Days" in v1) we see that it will be something we have to guard strongly against until the Lord raptures the church.

It is the problem and threat of false teachers and the damage they wreak on God's sheep. Paul refers to false teachers here in the church as "vessels of dishonor" in a household. In Acts 20 he warned the Ephesian elders about "wolves" arising from within the body of elders in that same church. Godly, true teachers, Timothy included, and those that follow their lead are to distance themselves from the vessels of dishonor – the false teachers and from their influences.

In 3:1-4 the apostle lists 19 marks that can characterize and help identify a false teacher and those influenced by their doctrine and practice. Not all 19 need be present or all in the same degree. The main point is that to be an honorable and useful vessel for the Lord's work and pleasure, faithful believers are to mark out and avoid contamination from such. Paul concludes with 9 marks of a clean vessel in 3:10-11. To which one might add one more: Avoid contamination!

#### **With v19 comes both:**

- 1) a seal of assurance of salvation for believers, and
- 2) with it and the new birth, a clear call and command to abstain from all forms of wickedness and (those that purvey it in doctrine and deed, a point which follows in v20-22, etc)

**v20, Within one large household (Paul means the church here) the two kinds of vessels** here draw the distinction between the vulgar or common, and the honorable or clean vessel.

**V21, the responsibility of separation in daily life belongs to the believer,** the follower of the Lord who is to maintain a holy and distinct life and values.

**V22, How to go about it: *What* to flee from, *what* to run to, and *who* to do it with.**

**3:1-4, The 19 marks that can characterize false teachers in varying degrees, the attitudes their doctrine can produce, and what it eventually produces in those that follow them**

*lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers (blasphemers), disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, 4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,*

**v5b, "avoid such men as these" – See Romans 16:17**

**v6, A particular problem in the Ephesian city and the church there too, "weak women weighed down with sins" are preyed upon by these men, these wolves.** Each church, each time period, each region, can have it's own weaknesses and proclivities. **Paul is not picking on women here.** There is a particular problem in Ephesus that signals a larger warning for us all. Watch out!

**V10-11, The phrase, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" certainly applies here!** Paul gives 9 marks of a person who is keen on keeping their vessel clean and honorable. This is a life worth living, a life that has focus and purpose!

*Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, 11 persecutions, and sufferings*

**V12, Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.**

In various ways and intensities, in different times and places and cultures, this will be true for every believer. The upward call of holiness will create tensions in our minds and hearts. The flesh's desire to not suffer unpleasantness, or to be deprived of relationships, pleasures or other common pursuits will be pitted by the enemy of our souls against the pleasure of pleasing God. Satan urges the flesh, via the values of the world, to distrust God's goodness and the wonderful rewards of faithfulness.

**Who will you believe and trust today?**