



7/27/26

2 Timothy 2:20-26

This Sunday's message was a perfect reason to rehearse the gospel to ourselves every day. Jesus' words of the father's love in the parable ARE the gospel story. And even more! Jesus is the older brother. Only He doesn't get mad when we come home. He's the one who died for us so that we could come home! Amen!!!

*Blessings,
Jonna*

Wow. What a beautiful picture of the love of the Father toward both the one who lives recklessly and the one who lives with a heart of self righteousness. As I think of praying for the prodigal, someone I once was, I want to pray first of all that the prodigal sees the Lord for the loving, patient, merciful God He is. He WELCOMES us home with open arms. He never says we have to EARN His love. We already have it. So as I look at 2 Timothy 2:20-26, I want to keep the truth of the heart of God at the forefront of my mind.

Vs. 20-21 ~ "Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work."

We are all under the kingdom of God and His household. We are vessels here to display His glory. No matter what kind of vessel we are, we ultimately point to the glory of God. The vessels for honorable use have joy in pointing to His glory. The vessels for dishonorable use aren't thinking to point to His glory, but the very fact that God is the Most High, holy Lord, means that even those who try to disparage His name will ultimately be used for His glory.

How does someone get to be a vessel used for honorable use? He cleanses himself from what is dishonorable. What does this mean? Does it mean that he has to work and work to get himself cleaned up? No. It simply means that he is truly repentant for his sin, and wants to turn away

from the things that would make him dishonorable.

When I think of the character of the Master of the house... the holiness, kindness, and goodness of the Father, I realize that turning from what is dishonorable is for my ultimate good and joy and peace. So much of the choices I make are motivated by my understanding of my good Father. If I think He's a tyrant who doesn't care about me, why bother trying to be a good vessel for Him? But He's a loving, patient, thoughtful God who runs to me and shares His goodness with me. There's joy in being an honorable vessel for Him.

I also see here that if I once was a vessel for dishonorable use, which I was, I wasn't stuck there! There is ALWAYS room for repentance! I'm not born into a position that can't be changed. God has a place for me. He does require repentance. That's my job. But He's the one who cleans me up. He sets me apart and makes me holy. He gives me purpose. He gives me opportunity be used for His glory. His glory is my good.

Vs. 22 ~ "So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart."

So... in light of the fact that I'm not stuck in my dishonor, and that I can repent and not stay in dishonor... FLEE... RUN... from youthful passions... the passions of my flesh which wage war against my soul! God doesn't want me to run from youthful passions so that He can withhold good from me. He wants me to run from them so that He can lavish good on me. Truly, a person stuck in youthful passions will not want the good that God has for him.

Sadly, our natural tendency ever since the Garden of Eden is NOT to take responsibility for our own actions, but to blame others, including the Lord. Proverbs 19:3 says, "When a man's folly brings his way to ruin, his heart rages against the Lord." The Lord is even willing to welcome us back home when we've chosen to go against Him... if we'll just repent. Expecting God to welcome us home while we continue to trample on His glory is like expecting a wife to welcome her husband home while he continues to be in a blatant affair.

What should I pursue if I'm running from youthful passions?

- Pursue righteousness... pursue the things God loves, the things that are truly good.*
- Pursue faith... pursue a deeper understanding of who God is so that my confidence in Him can keep growing.*
- Pursue love... God is love. Pursue a deeper relationship with God.*
- Pursue peace... peace that comes from being near Him.*

A person who is pursuing the things that make us a vessel for honorable use will find that the people who want to be used for dishonorable use are not comfortable being around her. She will find that being around those who call on the Lord from a pure heart is a great encouragement, and they can support each other and spur each other on in their faith. There is

no need to have a spiritual rivalry, trying to fight over who's closest to the Lord. To call on the Lord from a pure heart is to know that He has plenty of room for all His vessels.

Vs. 23 ~ "Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels."

It is dishonorable to get caught up in foolish, dumb arguments that only cause fights and conflicts. Why would we get caught up into those types of conflicts? Maybe to feel superior... maybe to deflect from the things we're doing wrong... maybe to justify choices based on feeling rather than the facts of God's word. Whatever the reason, the honorable vessel recognizes what really matters... the glory of God.

Vs. 24-25a ~ "And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness."

The Lord's servant, a vessel for honorable use, does not dishonor Him by being a fighter. The Lord's servant is not self righteous. Instead, she's kind to everybody... even those who are vessels for dishonorable use. How can she be kind to someone who isn't kind to her? She's not caught up into youthful passions, because it's youthful passions that cause a person to fight for her rights. Instead, she's pursuing righteousness, faith, love, and peace... She's pursuing the character of God.

The Lord's servant is also able to teach. This isn't just about being able to say the right words, but to teach by example. People don't learn from someone who says, "Do what I say, not what I do."

She also patiently endures evil. This is definitely something that has to come from a heart that flees youthful passions. It's really hard to patiently endure evil. That means through macro suffering I remain under the behavior of someone who has not run from their youthful passions and treats me badly. To do this, I have to rely on the Lord.

Finally, the one who has run from youthful passions will correct her opponents with gentleness. Again, this takes massive biblical maturity. There's no retaliation, no threatening. 1 Peter 2:23 says I do this by entrusting myself to God.

What's the goal in all of this? The next part tells me...

Vs. 25b-26 ~ God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will."

This is where prayer has to come in. I need to pray for the Lord to keep my heart set on Him so that I can be a vessel for honorable use. What is the greatest privilege of being a vessel for Him? Seeing someone repent and turn to the Lord. I need to pray for that! I need to not worry

about, "What if they never turn to Jesus and all this macro suffering and enduring evil is in vain?" It's never in vain, because my loyalty is to God, not to man. What makes my kindness and patience worthwhile is not that they change, but that I'm faithful to God. He grants repentance. He provides the way of escape when they're willing to repent. My job is just to be faithful to Him, first in prayer, then in behavior.

O Lord, this is HARD! But hard is not bad, it's just hard. And as a recovering prodigal, I'm so thankful that You patiently endured my youthful passions while You waited for me to come back to You. Thank You for helping me to know the truth that sets me free. Please help me to be faithful to You with other prodigals and trust You to work in their lives... Help me to be faithful even when I can't see You at work. I trust that You're working.

What if the older brother had responded as a servant of God. How would he have been different when his younger brother repented? He would have welcomed him home. He would have been praying the whole time for him to repent and come to his senses. O Lord, please help me to be more like the dad and less like the brothers. Thank You for pursuing me and not giving up. Thank You for helping me come to my senses so that I could escape the devil's snare. Father, thank You for running to me to embrace me when I came home.