

**Running the Race of Faith
2 Timothy 2:20-26 (Week 06) 05/24/2026
Protecting the Church from False Teaching
Being Useful to The Lord**

This is my message written prior to being preached. Please excuse the bullet point format and any grammatical mistakes. This is meant to be spoken.

²⁰ 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. ²¹ 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. ²² So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. ²³ Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. ²⁴ And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, ²⁵ correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, ²⁶ and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will. (2 Timothy 2:20-26)

Introduction & Review

- Probably my favorite **animated movie** of all time is **Toy Story**.
- And one of its main themes is **the importance of being useful**.
- If you remember, the movie begins with **Andy's birthday party**.
- And all the **toys** are worried that **he'll get presents** that will replace them.
- **Woody**, the leader, tries to comfort the **other toys** by saying...

Hey, listen, no one's getting replaced. This is Andy we're talking about...It doesn't matter how much we're played with. What matters is that we're here for Andy when he needs us. That's what we're made for. Right? (Woody)

- Woody understands that a toy's purpose is to **be there for their child**.
- So, their greatest fear is being **put on the shelf**, no longer being played with.
- The toys know that they are made **for Andy** and they want **to be useful to him**.
- And it's not just toys who want to be useful, **that desire is built into people as well**.
- We want to be useful to our **spouses**, our **friends**, in our **homes**, on the **job** and in our **churches**.
- But most importantly, as believers, we should desire **to be useful to the LORD**.
- Because that's **what we were made for. Right! To be...**

²¹ ...set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work. (2 Timothy 2:21)

- So, **if being useful to God** is what we were made for.
- Then it's important to know **how to do that?**
- And that's what our **passage for today focuses on**.

- If you remember from last week, we looked at **verses 14-19** of **chapter 2**.
- There Paul gave Timothy instructions for **protecting the church against false teachers**.
- And in our passage for today, **those false teachers** are still around.
- But Paul's instructions go beyond dealing with false teachers.
- If followed they will empower God's people to become **useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work**.
- **And that's what we want, RIGHT!**
- So, Paul begins with...

1. The Illustration of Becoming Useful to the Lord

- Verse 20...

20 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. (2 Timothy 2:20)

- A **great house** has buckets, jars, and cups made of **wood and clay** that are used for dishonorable purposes **like disposal of garbage and human waste**.
- But it also has **silver and gold vessels** that are used for **honorable purposes** such as dining and entertaining.
- And what is this **great house**?
- Well, in **1 Timothy 3:15**, Paul had already used this **metaphor to describe God's church**.

15 ...the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth. (1 Timothy 3:15)

- So, what Paul is saying in **2 Timothy**, is that the church contains **both honorable and dishonorable vessels**...
- That is, within the **visible church** there are both **true and false believers, false teachers**.
- This follows from what we saw last week in **verse 19** when Paul quoted from **Numbers 16**.
- If you remember, **Numbers 16**, records **Korah's rebellion against Moses and Aaron's authority** over Israel.
- And quoting from **verse 5 of Numbers 16**, Paul says...

19 ... "The Lord knows those who are his,"... (2 Timothy 2:19)

- When Korah rebelled, God made it clear that **Moses and Aaron** belonged to him, **he chose them to lead Israel, not Korah**.
- And in the same way, **in the visible church**,
- There are those who belong to the Lord and those who do not.
- **We may not always know** which is which, **but God does**.

- Jesus also taught that the kingdom of heaven (the visible church) has both true and false believers.
- In the Parable of the wheat and the tares (or weeds), Beginning in **Matthew 13:24** He says...

²⁴ ...“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, ²⁵ but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. ²⁶ So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. ²⁷ And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?’ ²⁸ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ So the servants said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ ²⁹ But he said, ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, “Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.”” (Matthew 13:24-30)

- Jesus tells us that his kingdom (his church) would include both **wheat and weeds**.
- Both true believers (vessels of honor) and false believers (vessels of dishonor).
- **St. Chrysostom** had it right way back in **the 4th century**, when He said...

Let it not disturb thee that there are corrupt and wicked men. For in a great house there are such vessels. (St. Chrysostom)

- Now in his illustration, Paul not only points out the fact that there are **false believers mixed in the true believers (vessels of dishonor alongside vessels of honor)**.
- But he gives hope for **the dishonorable vessels**, in **verse 21** he continues...

²¹ 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. (2 Timothy 2:21)

- There's hope because even if you are currently a **vessel of dishonor...**
- It's possible to **cleanse yourself** and become a **vessel for honorable use**.
- And how do you **cleanse yourself**?
- Well, **cleansing** in the Bible has **two stages**.
- **First**, you **must cleanse yourself** from what is dishonorable,
- That would include **false teaching, false religion, false thinking** as well as any other sin.
- You must **repent of your sin** and **come to or return** Jesus Christ.
- Basically, this initial cleansing takes place at a **person's conversion** when they put their trust in Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of their sins and the saving of their soul.
- As Paul wrote to **the church in Corinth...**

¹¹ And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:11)

- This describes the onetime event of a **true conversion**, which is symbolized by baptism.
- When a person gives their life to Christ, they are washed, **cleansed of his sins**.

- But the cleansing does not stop there.
- As the apostle **John famously wrote to believers...**

⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

- If you're going to remain clean, if you are going to continue being a vessel of honor.
- You must confess your sin, which not only means admitting your sin and asking for forgiveness,
- But repenting of your sin, turning away from it.
- And just to be clear, when **we are cleansed at conversion**,
- We receive the **gift of salvation**, and that salvation is secure,
- our initial cleansing and salvation aren't **revoked when we sin**.
- However, as believers, if we sin there is a break in our relationship with God,
- and therefore, we must confess our sin, seeking forgiveness and cleansing,
- **So that we might maintain fellowship with Him and remain useful to Him.**
- So, to summarize, to **cleanse yourself** you must first, **be truly converted**.
- You must **trust in the sacrificial atoning death of Jesus Christ to cleanse you from your sin**,
- And **second, throughout your life**, you continue to be **cleansed as you confess** your sin.
- And Paul says this is how you become **useful to the Lord**.
- **Those who are cleansed...**

will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.

- Notice **four things** that take place **for those who are cleansed**.
- First, they...

will be a vessel for honorable use

- Which means that God will use them for his glorious purposes, for his kingdom.
- For every good work.
- **Second**, the cleansed are...

set apart as holy

- They are set apart as honorable vessels.
- They are moved into a new category by God.
- They are holy in his sight and therefore useful in his kingdom.
- **Third**, the cleansed are

useful to the master of the house

- That word **master implies** that we are servants or slaves to the Lord.

- Therefore, we should seek to serve the Master in the manner that is useful to him.
- Doing what he commands, **regardless** of our own **desires or expectations**.
- **Being useful means submitting to the will of your master.**
- **Then Fourth**, the cleansed are...

ready for every good work.

- This is clearly seen in **Ephesians Chapter 2** where Paul writes...

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

- This is how we are cleansed from our iniquity, by God's grace through faith, not works.
- However, Paul continues...

¹⁰ For we (the saved, the cleansed) are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:8-10)

- The cleansed have been **re-created by God's grace**, through faith in Jesus Christ.
- And what have we been created to do?
- **Good works**, we have **been created in Christ Jesus** to do **useful good works for God**.
- So, Paul has given Timothy and us this initial illustration of what it takes to become useful to the Lord.
- It takes being **cleansed**.
- It means **believing in the true gospel that brings cleansing**.
- It means confessing (repenting) of your sin that you can be set apart for the work of God.
- And this becomes even more clear in verses 22-25 as Paul continue with a series of commands...

2. The Imperatives for Remaining Useful to the Lord

- As believers who've been cleansed, we must maintain our cleanness.
- **And thus maintain our usefulness to the Lord.**
- And as we saw, **part of that involves confession of our sin.**
- But even better, there are things we can do, to help us avoid sin all together.
- And that's what we find in **verse 22**.
- In this verse Paul gives two imperatives which are crucial for remaining useful to God.
- First, he exhorts Timothy to...

A. Flee from Sin

- Verse 22...

²² So flee youthful passions... (2 Timothy 2:22)

- Timothy is probably **approaching forty** at this point and yet for Paul he's still a young man.
- And **susceptible to youthful passions**.
- At 62, I'm not sure if **we ever escape the passions of youth**.
- That word **Passions** (**epi-thu-mia** in the Greek) can refer to any kind of strong longing or desire.
- But most frequently refers to sinful or lustful longing.
- As in **Romans 1:24** where Paul writes of the unrighteous, he says...

24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity... (Romans 1:24)

- And in **Galatians 5:16-21** When Paul lists the...

16 ...the desires of the flesh. (Galatians 5:16)

- he includes a fairly extensive list...

19 ...sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. (Galatians 5:19-21)

- And it's from these and other youthful passions (or sins) that Paul commands Timothy to flee.
- Now that word flee in the Greek means to run away, to escape,
- **to get the heck out of there.**
- And this may go against the grain of men especially who declare: **"I never back down."**
- I'm going to stand and **fight this sin** until I defeat it.
- But Scripture points out that there is a time to flee.
- **Paul commanded the Corinthians,**

18 Flee from sexual immorality... (1 Corinthians 6:18)

- and

14 ...flee from idolatry. (1 Corinthians 10:14)

- After Paul warned Timothy about the love of money, he added,

11 But as for you, O man of God, flee these things... (1 Timothy 6:11)

- So those who wish to remain useful to the Lord must **flee from all kinds of sin**.
- And what this obviously means is that when you find yourself in a place, **in a circumstance**,
- with a person that is tempting you to sin.
- You must do what it **takes to overcome that temptation**.
- Sometimes this involves actual, **physical fleeing**...
- Like **Joseph with Potiphar's wife**, sometimes you must run for your life.

- However, there are other times when you can't actually run.
- For example, if there's a person you work with who tempts you to be angry,
- Short of quitting your job, you cannot physically flee that temptation.
- However, Scripture not only speaks of **fleeing from sin**, but killing it.
- In **Romans 8:13** Paul writes...

13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. (Romans 8:13)

- And In **Romans 13:14** Paul writes...

14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. (Romans 13:14)

- These commands apply to all kinds of sins or temptations.
- whether tempted by sex, food, drink, anger, greed, pride or anything else.
- We are not only to **physically flee from sin (when possible)**
- But we must seek to **put sin to death**.
- As **17th Century Puritan theologian, John Owen** said...

Be killing sin or sin will be killing you. (John Owen)

- Now what does **this fleeing from and killing sin look like?**
- Well, again, **practically speaking**, this would include removing yourself from situations where you are tempted to sin.
- It may include walking out of the movie theatre when the images are putting sinful thoughts into your mind.
- It may mean walking away from people who are starting to gossip.
- It may mean not spending extended time alone, with anyone, we find romantically or sexually attractive. **Except our spouse.**
- It may mean calling on a **fellow brother or sister** in Christ to pray for you and hold you accountable to a particularly tempting sin.
- But I think the main thing, the thing we must always do to flee or kill sin in our lives is call upon the LORD for strength.
- To the Corinthians Paul wrote...

13 No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

- We can resist (flee from) temptation by calling on God for the strength and grace to overcome.
- For God is faithful and He promises he will provide a way of escape.
- Whether that escape be a change in location, a change of heart or something else.
- God will give us what we need to overcome sin in our lives.

- And as we flee from our sin, **as we escape temptation, as we be killing sin in our lives.**
- **We remain useful for the Lord's service.** To the Romans Paul writes...

¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. (Romans 12:1)

- That phrase **spiritual worship** could also be translated divine service.
- It is those who are **cleansed, holy and acceptable to God** who he can use in his divine service.
- Now, a word of caution here, that doesn't mean you must be perfect before God can use us.
- But it does mean you must present ourselves to God, give ourselves to him.
- And it does mean we must **flee temptation and sin**,
- We must be **killing the sin that is in our lives**.
- We can't **continue in our sin** and **expect God** to use us for his purposes in this world.
- **But remaining useful to the Lord is not only about fleeing sin.**
- It is also about **pursuing virtue**...

B. Pursue Virtue

- And by virtue, I mean character qualities that God calls his children to develop in their lives.
- As we **run from those youthful passions** we must turn and run towards **godly qualities**.
- And here Paul lists **four virtues** that will **help us remain honorable, useful to the Lord**.

²² ...pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. (2 Timothy 2:22)

- First comes

righteousness

- In Scripture God bestows (gives) righteousness to those who put their trust in the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ. **We receive...**

²² the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. (Romans 3:22)

- And once we receive the righteousness of God,
- This empowers us to live **more righteously**,
- **becoming** God's useful instruments of righteousness in this world.
- Paul instructs the Romans to...

¹³ ...present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. (Romans 6:13)

- **Because** we have been **brought from death to life**.
- **Because** we have been **born again**, we can now **be God's instruments of righteousness**.
- **He can use us for his righteous purposes in this world**.

- So first we receive **Jesus' imputed righteousness**.
- Then we **can "pursue righteousness"**.
- We can do what is right and therefore **remain useful to the Lord!**
- And along with **righteousness** we must also pursue...

faith

- We often think of faith as a onetime thing, at conversion we put our faith in Jesus Christ.
- But faith is a lifelong pursuit.
- To grow in faith and to live by faith, to continually in all circumstances put our trust in the Lord.
- This is what we must pursue. **It is those who...**

7 ...walk by faith, not by sight. (2 Corinthians 5:7)

- That are useful to the Lord.
- Next, we must pursue...

love

- We must love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind and strength
- And we must **love people** (our family, friends, neighbors, fellow church members, strangers and even enemies)
- It is those who love the most, that are most useful in communicating and demonstrating the love of God in this world.
- And finally, **we must pursue...**

Peace (tranquility harmony), along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

- This is a specific call for **peace in the church**.
- Peace with **fellow believers** who call on the **Lord from a pure heart**.
- We must seek to **foster peace** with our brothers and sisters in Christ.
- **Communication and forgiveness** in the body of **Christ are crucial for peace**.
- As the Body of Christ, **we together** represent Jesus to a Lost world.
- And it is when **we pursue peace** with one another that we truly represent **the Prince of Peace**.
- **And therefore, remain useful to the Lord.**
- So, Paul has given **these two crucial commands** for remaining useful to the Lord.
- **Flee sin and pursue virtue.**
- And we must **do these at the same time**.
- We must run as fast as our feet will carry us away from sinful desires.
- And at the same time, he was to sprint, arms stretched out, after righteous conduct, faith (trust in God), love for God and others, and peace in the body of Christ.
- And it is when we do this, when we flee sin and pursue virtue that we remain vessels for honor.
- Cups that Christ is pleased to fill with his grace and to use for his purposes in the church and in the world.

- Now these first two commands to flee sin and pursue virtue are **very general and personal**.
- They apply every day of our lives, **as we go about living in this world**.
- And they focus on us as individuals; this is the kind of person you should be if you want to be useful to God.
- Paul then moves to **two more specific commands**.
- These really flow from the pursuit of *peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. (2 Timothy 2:22)*
- The following two commands **relate specifically** to maintaining peace church,
- and they are directed at Timothy as he deals **with false teachers**.
- **Timothy** if you are to be useful in maintaining peace in the church and thus useful in ministry.
- **First**, you must...

C. Avoid Quarrels

- We saw this last week **as Paul told Timothy to...**

14 Remind them of these things, and charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers. (2 Timothy 2:14)

- So, Timothy was to charge **his congregation** not to quarrel about words.
- And then **Paul tells him to...**

23 Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. (2 Timothy 2:23)

- The verb translated “**have nothing to do**” (*para-it-eō*) means to decline, shun, to avoid,
- **to excuse one’s self from**.
- And what this means is that for the sake of peace,
- There is a time to **keep quiet and just walk** away from a debate, or argument.
- And that time **is specifically** when you are engaging in a “**foolish, ignorant controversy**” that **is moving towards a quarrel**.
- Paul is saying or at least implying that there were those in the church.
- Certainly, **these false teachers** who were causing **foolish, ignorant controversies**.
- Their arguments were **literally moronic and ignorant**,
- and it would have been **tempting for Timothy** to use their **foolishness against them**.
- Timothy, with his training from Paul, could have engaged them in **debate and destroyed** their foolish ideas.
- He could present a well thought-out Biblically based argument in contrast to **their foolishness**.
- But Paul warned him to refrain? **Why, Because...**

you know that they (their foolish, ignorant controversies) breed quarrels

- I’ve been in such quarrels, times when I knew (based on Scripture) I was right.

- But the problem was, **I was talking to an ignorant fool who enjoyed controversy.**
- And therefore, **I made no progress in convincing him of his foolishness.**
- But unfortunately, **I kept on arguing anyway.**
- Even thinking **I was doing the right thing.**
- But it never ended well, **I was not being useful to the LORD.**
- Because as Paul writes...

24 And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome... (2 Timothy 2:24)

- **Quarrels** get us nowhere, they are **not useful to God**, they do not bring peace.
- But that doesn't mean you have **to let everything go completely.**
- There is an **alternative to quarrelling**, Paul continues...

D. Gently Correct Errors

- **Verse 24...**

24 And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, 25 correcting his opponents with gentleness. (2 Timothy 2:24-25)

- If we want to **see peace in the church.**
- If we want to be **useful to the Lord**, especially in **correcting false teaching in the church.**
- We must understand and **apply these verses.**
- **First**, we must understand that we are

God's servants

- Earlier we saw that those who are cleansed are **"useful to the masters"**
- So again, we see that **God is the master and we are the servants.**
- Which means, when it comes to **correcting errors** we must focus on **God's word**,
- not on our own **passion or opinions.**
- Some commentators believe that when Paul told Timothy to flee youthful passions, he was warning him not to let his own passions and pride take over when he confronted false teachers.
- Instead, Timothy, must remember he is God's servant, representing God not himself.
- Therefore, instead of correcting with his own passions which breed quarrels,
- He must gently correct with God's word.
- **Second**, we must be

kind to everyone

- Harshness, interruptions, and putting people down will get us nowhere.
- But if we wait our turn, speak with kindness and remember we are called to love this person.
- That will go a long way to correct errors.

- **Then Third** we must be

able to teach

- Now this can refer to preaching or teaching a group of people.
- Those who preach or teach the Scripture must be able to gently correct errors.
- But this doesn't mean everyone must preach a sermon or even teach a class.
- This can also refer to engaging with individual or small groups.
- And to be useful to the Lord we must be able to gently communicate what the word of God says.
- As opposed to what the false teaching is.
- As believers we must all **be able to correct errors** not with quarrels but by delivering God's truth with clarity and conviction.
- **Fourth**, we must

patiently endure evil

- This phrase is one word in the Greek, and it simply means **putting up with wrongs**.
- The NIV translates it **not being resentful**.
- And basically, what that looks like is **enduring the attack of our opponents**.
- Not quarreling, not retaliating, not resorting to name-calling,
- but being kind, gentle, loving and patient, waiting patiently to speak God's truth.
- **And finally, summarizing it all, we must engage in...**

correcting our opponents with gentleness

- We must be patient, waiting and speaking rationally and calmly and kindly,
- A gentle correction might begin, "**May I share Scripture with you?**"
- or "That's a popular idea; may I offer another perspective?"
- Earlier in his letter to the **Ephesians** (where Timothy is now ministering) ...
- Paul **gives similar instructions** to the church elders. **The church was being...**

¹⁴ ...tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. (Ephesians 4:14)

- **Apparently**, these false teachers had **been around for a long time**.
- And to **deal with this problem** Paul tells the Ephesian elders...

¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, (Ephesians 4:15)

- As we encounter **false teachers**, or anyone with wrong or unbiblical ideas.
- We must **speak the truth in love**; we must **correct our opponents with gentleness**.
- For in that way, **we can be used by the Lord to maintain peace in the church**.

- And what does that look like or result in? That takes us our final point...

3. The Impact of Being Used by the Lord

- Paul says if we do what is prescribed.
- If you flee sin and pursue virtues, **if we remain useful to the LORD.**
- And **if we avoid quarrels and instead gently correct errors.**
- Then God can work through us, **he can use us in the lives of those we are correcting...**

25 ...God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth,

- The truth is, no matter how gently we correct errors, no matter how well we speak the truth in love.
- We cannot persuade anyone **to repent from their sins or believe the truth.**
- YES, we can be used by God as an instrument of His righteousness.
- But notice Paul says that it is **God who grants repentance.**
- This speaks of **God's sovereignty** even in our decision to turn from our sin.
- And notice also that it's repentance that **leads to a knowledge of the truth.**
- What that means is **it is our sin that keeps us from the truth.**
- When we refuse **to let go of our sin**, be it lust, or pride, or greed, or any other sin.
- If we will not let it go, if we are unwilling to repent (to turn from our sin).
- Then we will never see the truth, **because we don't want to see the truth**
- **Because the truth requires repentance.**
- Put simply we can't believe the gospel and continually engage in sin.
- So, we reject the **gospel and remain in our sin.**
- And what that says is that even though many people say they can't believe the gospel because it doesn't make sense, or it is just a myth, or they can't believe in miracles.
- **Those are all just smoke screens.**
- Ultimately, believing the truth of the gospel **is a moral problem** not an **intellectual** one.
- People don't believe the gospel because the gospel means they must forsake, flee from, kill their sin.
- **So, when God grants repentance**, the blinders come off and we can see the truth.

26 and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will. (2 Timothy 2:25-26)

- The devil is not only real, but he is ultimately the "god of this world"
- The god of all those who do not put their trust in Jesus Christ.
- He captures people and **they become his servants.**
- **The world is filled with people** who are trapped by the devil, **doing not God's will but his.**
- Following **his lead into a life of sin and ultimately following him into hell.**

- Many people **feel the trap of their sin**.
- **Physically**, the lure of food, drink, or sex can be overwhelming.
- **Emotionally**, fear, anger, and resentment can **spin out of control**.
- We lose too many battles with **envy, anger, greed and selfish ambition**.
- But thanks be to God, we need not remain **in the devil's sin infested trap**.
- In fact, **escaping from the devil** is one way to describe salvation.
- The Apostle John writes...

⁸ Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. (1 John 3:8)

- When someone asks us why did Jesus come into the world.
- We usually quote a verse like **Luke 19:10...**

¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." (Luke 19:10)

- And that is certainly true but **so is 1 John 3:8**.
- Because **the lost that Jesus came to seek**, can be found in the devil's snare.
- And therefore, Jesus on the cross **destroy the works of the devil**.
- He made it possible to escape the **devil's trap**.
- And that is great news! That is the gospel.
- And here's the thing, **if God has granted you repentance**,
- and you have come to the knowledge of the truth, if you have believed the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- If you have come to your senses and by God's grace escaped the devil's trap.
- Then God wants to use you to **help deliver others from this same trap**.
- With those outside the church, the starting point is **engagement and evangelism**.
- Proclaiming to them **the glorious devil defeating gospel of Jesus Christ**.
- And for those who are inside the church, who have abandoned the truth of the gospel for false doctrine of one sort or another.
- The starting point is to **"gently correct their errors" that they might escape the devil's snare**.
- So, our job is clear, we are to flee sin, pursue virtue, avoid quarrels, gently correct errors.
- That we might be vessels of honor, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work, in the lives of our friends, family, neighbors, coworkers, and even fellow church members.
- **So that...**

²⁵ ...God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, ²⁶ and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will. (2 Timothy 2:25-26)

Would you join me in prayer...