

**Running the Race of Faith
2 Timothy 3:1-9 (Week 07) 05/31/2026
Difficulty in the Church**

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.

¹ But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. ² For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, ⁴ treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. ⁶ For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, ⁷ always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth. ⁸ Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith. ⁹ But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men. (2 Timothy 3:1-9)

Introduction & Review

- **Today** we continue our study through **2 Timothy**.
- And to better **understand** our passage we need to review the **final verses of Chapter 2**.
- If you remember, in verse 20, Paul began with an **illustration...**

²⁰ Now in a great house (the visible church) 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)

- In the church there are both **true believers (honorable vessels)**
- and **false believers (dishonorable vessels)**.
- **Paul continues...**

²¹ ...if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, (2 Timothy 2:21)

- **There's hope, a choice to make, you can remain a vessel of dishonor,**
- or you can **cleanse yourself**.
- And we know cleansing only comes to those who repent, turning away from their sin and **trusting in the** sacrificial death of Jesus Christ.
- For it is His **blood that cleanses** us from our sin and makes...

²¹ ...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)

- Paul then in **verses 22-25** gives a series of commands, for remaining useful to the Lord.
- You must **flee youthful passions** (sin),
- You must **pursue the virtues** of righteousness, faith, love and peace in the church.

- And to do that, **to maintain peace in the church and deal with false teachers (dishonorable vessels)** you must both **avoid quarrels and yet gently correct errors.**
- Then **finally**, Paul concludes **chapter 2** with the result of living in obedience to these commands.
- If we do these things **in the world with non-believers**,
- and in the church with those who have strayed into doctrinal errors (**false teachers and those who follow them**). Then....

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)

- **So**, in verses **20-26 of Chapter 2** Paul has **divided the visible church into two groups.**
- The honorable useful (true believers) and **dishonorable (false believers).**
- And he's made it clear how a person can move from being **dishonorable to being honorable** and useful to the LORD.
- And this is what **Paul, inspired by the Spirit, wants for Timothy and every believer.**
- **To be cleansed from their sins.**
- **That they might be used by God to bring cleansing to others.**
- **To bring people to repentance and faith in Christ, thus enabling them to **escape the snare of the devil** and enter the great house, **the church, the kingdom of God.****
- **But as we know, there are those who will not cleanse themselves.**
- They will not **repent of their sins**; they will not come to Christ to receive his righteousness.
- **Instead**, they will hold fast to their **false beliefs** and continue **to teach them to others.**
- They will remain **dishonorable**, not escaping the snare of the devil, but ever **remaining in his service, doing his will.**
- And that brings us to our, **less than pleasant**, passage for today.
- In **Chapter 3 verses 1-9** Paul describes **the Satanic evil false teachers and their followers.**
- And **this is meant as a warning to Timothy and all true believers.**
- Be warned that as you seek to serve the Lord in the church and the world,
- there will be opposition **from dishonorable vessels**,
- false teachers and the like **who are serving the devil himself. So be prepared for...**

1. The Coming of Difficulty

- That's our first point... **Verse 1 of Chapter 3, Paul begins...**

1 But understand this,

- This call for understanding **refers to everything we will look at today.**
- **From the rest of verse 1 to the end of verse 9.**
- Paul wants Timothy to **understand** (to know - **ginosko**) what he's facing.
- And this **call for understanding** is one of **only two commands** found in **these 9 verses.**

- When we **study the Bible** sometimes our application is clear.
- It involves outwardly doing or not doing something,
- Or feeling or not feeling something.
- like **do to others as you would have them do to you**, love your neighbor as yourself.
- or don't murder, commit adultery, steal, lie or covet, **just to name a few**.
- But **other times** God wants his people to take in and understand...
- To know and believe certain truths. In fact, Jesus said...

³¹ ...“If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³² and you will know (ginosko) the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:31-32)

- And in our passage for today, we are being called to understand, to know the truth.
- Why?
- So that we can be set free from lies (false teaching).
- And prepared to deal with the reality of **false teachers in the church**.
- So, we must understand what follows...
- **And the first thing we need to understand is...**

that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. (2 Timothy 3:1)

- God wants us to know that there will be times of difficulty.
- That word **difficulty** in English is a **bit understated**.
- The **Greek word** includes the ideas of being **dangerous, harsh, fierce and savage**.
- In fact, the only other time this word is used in the NT is in **Matthew chapter 8** where it describes two demon-possessed men who were...

²⁸ ...so fierce that no one could pass that way. Matthew 8:28

- So, the point is, **in the last days** there will come times of **fierce danger and difficulty**.
- And so, the question comes, what does Paul mean by “**in the last days**”.
- For some, “**the last days**” points to the end of time, when **evil reaches** its greatest height just prior to **its ultimate defeat** when **Christ returns**.
- And to be sure, Scripture describes a **coming unprecedented time of great difficulty**...
- In **Matthew 24:21** we read...

²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. (Matthew 24:21)

- But difficulty, **tribulation and trial** have been part of life from the beginning.
- To his disciples Jesus said...

³³ ...In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world. (John 16:33)

- And **Peter warns...**

12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. (1 Peter 4:12)

- The Christian life has always been **full of difficulty, trials, tests, tragedy.**
- And even though this difficulty may **intensity** just prior to Jesus returns.
- We are **not exempt from last days' difficulty.**
- Because the **New Testament** teaches that we **are, right now, living in "the last days".**
- The **last days** began with Jesus Christ.
- **In Hebrews 1:2 we read...**

2 but in these last days [God] has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things... (Hebrews 1:2)

- And in **Peter's first sermon**, when he explained the **Holy Spirit's** coming at Pentecost,
- he showed that **the last days** had begun when he said...

17 And in the last days it shall be, God declares (in Joel 2), that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh... (Acts 2:17)

- Peter was saying that Pentecost was the beginning of God pouring out his Spirit on all flesh.
- And Joel said this would take place **in the last days.**
- **So, the last days began some with Christ Coming** and they will continue until His return.
- In fact, this is confirmed in our passage.
- When Paul says "**in the last days**" he is speaking of **his and Timothy's Day.**
- We know this because in **verses 2-5** he describes how certain people will be in the last days
- and he ends this description by telling **Timothy to...**

5 ...Avoid such people. (2 Timothy 3:5)

- This means there are such people to avoid.
- **Which means Timothy was living in the last days.**
- All that to say, the last days were Timothy's Days, **and they continue in our days.**
- Therefore, we **must understand** that **fierce difficulty** has and will continue to come.
- So don't be surprised by difficulty, don't let it, as so many do, cause you lose faith in God.
- He is aware of the difficulty and **as we will see he will deal with the difficulty.**

- And Paul wants Timothy not only to understand the coming of difficulty but...

2. The Cause of Difficulty

- Now we all know that times of difficulty can be caused by many things.
- Natural disasters, plagues, famine, drought.
- But the **leading cause** of the difficulty Paul speaks of, **difficulty in the church, is...**

A. Evil People

- In verse 1, Paul has said there will be times of difficulty, and he then begins verse 2 with the word

For

- This word could also be translated because.
- It gives a reason for what has just been said.
- **So why will these last days be difficult?**

² For (because) people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, ⁴ treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. (2 Timothy 3:2-5)

- With a description like that, there can be no question **that these people are Evil.**
- But the question is, **who are these evil, difficulty causing people?**
- Well, Paul doesn't **tell us in these verses**, but in the context he does.
- As I pointed out in the beginning, they are the **dishonorable vessels found in the great house.**
- They are the **false teachers and their followers in the church.**
- And as such, they are those who are **still ensnared by the devil.**
- **This will be confirmed in verses 5-8 where we will discover that...**
- These men have the appearance of godliness.
- They **capture and led astray weak women,**
- They **oppose the truth**, and they are **disqualified regarding the faith** (their faith is false).
- So, these **false teachers (false believers)** were plaguing the Ephesian Church in Timothy's day.
- And their kind have caused difficulty in the church since then.
- Now that's not to say that **people outside the church** are not like this as well.
- But that is not the point, **of course the world is like this.**
- But the **difficulty Timothy and we must deal** with is caused by **evil people in the church.**

- And Paul does a pretty thorough job of describing their character or **lack thereof**.
- **First, they are...**

lovers of self, lovers of money

- A true believer seeks to love **God with all his heart soul mind and strength**,
- and to **love their neighbor as much as themselves**.
- But these **narcissistic people** set their **love on themselves and money**.
- They put **themselves above all else**.
- They do **what's best, not for their neighbor**, not for the church, not for God or his kingdom.
- **But for themselves**.
- Behind all they do is an agenda, **What's in it for me!**
- And since **money is a tool** used to **gain stuff for me**,
- To purchase the **necessities and pleasures of this world...**
- Love of self leads to love of money.
- And we remember that in **1 Timothy** Paul warned...

¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils... (1 Timothy 6:10)

- **All kinds of evils flow** from their love of self and money.
- Paul continues... They are...

Proud

- This word in the Greek includes the ideas of **empty boasting**.
- David wrote...

² My soul makes its boast in the LORD... (Psalms 34:2)

- But these **people** love themselves not God.
- So, they boast about their **self-perceived abilities and accomplishments**.
- Instead of **God's great and mighty works**.
- And as James tells us...

⁶ As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. (James 4:16)

- Being proud **goes with being...**

Arrogant

- This word arrogant can also be **translated haughty**.
- The arrogant believe themselves to be **better than others**.
- And so of course, these prideful arrogant people become...

Abusive

- That word is the Greek is **blasphēmos** they **blaspheme**.
- This describes **evil speech against God and man**.
- So, you can see how these qualities work together.
- Love of self leads to pride and arrogance which naturally leads to harsh speech.
- Those who think highly of themselves typically think little of others, **and their speech reflects it**.
- Then Paul adds, **they are...**

disobedient to their parents

- The **proud and abusive** don't respect **authority of any kind**.
- It begins with **their parents which God commands them to honor**.
- And it continues in **other areas of authority**.
- They don't love or respect God, his word, or his church.
- **And so they become a law unto themselves**.
- They would **have fit right in during** the times of the Judges because...

²⁵ In those days... Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. (Judges 21:25)

- And they are...

ungrateful (or unthankful)

- Those who focus on themselves above all else will not express gratitude to God or man.
- When they receive good from God or other people, their pride and arrogance will tell them...
- You have no reason to be thankful because you deserve all good things.
- And no surprise, they are...

unholy

- Which basically means they are "**not consecrated to God**."
- **They don't belong to a holy God, and they don't want to belong to a holy God**.
- Therefore, they are not holy, but instead **they are evil**.
- In **Leviticus 11:44** we read...

⁴ For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. (Leviticus 11:44)

- But these people prefer to be who they are and **do what they want**.
- Instead of pursuing God **and His holy ways**.
- And so **of course** they are...

heartless (or without love)

- This is a **strong negative word** in the Greek.
- It means to be without **natural affection** or to have a **hard heart towards others** including your family.

- Which is **par for the course** if you have a **warped love for self**.
- You have no heart; **no love left for others**.
- You only use people to get what you want.
- And they are...

unappeasable (or unforgiving)

- This means they have a lack of interest in forgiveness or reconciliation,
- They refuse to settle **grievances** or **let minor problems go**.
- And this of course **would lead to them being...**

Slanderous

- If you **won't forgive someone** then you are likely **to falsely accuse them**.
- That's what this word mean, it's the Greek word **diabolos**, where we get **the word devil**.
- **Who is the accuser of the brethren**.
- Like the devil **a slanderous person** seeks to **harm others** with their **accusing words**.
- **Slanderers broadcast false charges in public**.
- Which makes **sense because they are...**

without self-control

- **The fruit of the Spirit** includes **self-control**.
- But these people do not have **the Spirit** therefore they **have no self-control**.
- **They say and do what they want when they want**.
- Which is seen in they fact **that they are...**

brutal

- This word is also used to describe **the savagery and cruelty of wild untamed animals**.
- With their words and actions, **they brutalize others**.
- And they just keep getting worse...

not loving good

- This phrase is one word in the Greek, and it means they **despise what is good**.
- They **oppose goodness and good men**.
- And those who **oppose goodness inevitably promote evil**.
- As **Isaiah declares...**

²⁰ Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, (Isaiah 5:20)

- So, it is no **surprise** that they are also...

treacherous

- Which means “**traitor.**”
- Like **Judas** they will sell you out if they believe it will benefit them.
- And this makes them...

reckless (rash)

- That word literally means **falling forward.**
- They **thoughtlessly rush headlong** into their **evil treacherous ways.**
- Caring nothing about **the harm they cause** in the lives of others.
- **Because they are...**

swollen with conceit

- This is **one word** in the Greek, and it literally **means to inflate.**
- This just adds to their **pride and arrogance.** They have an inflated ego.
- They are **high minded** looking down on others.
- OKAY you can take a quick breath before we move on...
- Paul began this list with **the fact** that these people were **lovers of self and money.**
- And near the **end he gives us one more of their loves**, they are...

lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.

- **Lovers of pleasure** is the translation of two Greek words **phil-os (love)**
- and **hed-on-ai (pleasure – where we get our English word hedonism).**
- These people would fit well in our current culture, **which has rejected the God that we are called to love.**
- And have embraced **the pursuit of sinful pleasures.**
- They were controlled by pleasure, **as are many in today's world.**
- **Of such people Paul tells the Philippians.**

¹⁹ Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. (Philippians 3:19)

- They love themselves and they love the pleasures of this world.
- Therefore, their minds are not set on God, but on evil earthly things.
- Paul then concludes this **tragic vice-laden description of evil people, false believers, false teachers in the church** with these words...

having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power

- This **confirms that Paul is talking about “religious people”**.
 - And what this **says to me is** that they do a great job of hiding their many sins.
 - **They are hypocrites of the highest order.**
 - The word **hypocrites comes** from the Greek word **for actor**.
 - These people are great actors...
 - because with all their many vices **they have the appearance of godliness**.
- And this should come as no surprise.
 - Because there is a **kind of religion** that leads away from God.
 - We see this clearly **in the Gospel** with the **Jewish religious leader** who conspired to murder Jesus.
- And we saw it in Paul description of the **false teachers** of **1 Timothy**.
 - They had **“the appearance of godliness”** in that they were experts on the externals of religion.
 - They were masters of **asceticism and legalism**, as Paul had said they...

3 ...forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. (1 Timothy 4:3)

- They had a rule for everything.
- And they justified these rules **not with the word of God**. But with...

4 ...myths and endless genealogies, (1 Timothy 1:4)

- Their myths were based on **Old Testament genealogies** to justify their false teachings.
- And so, **to some** they appeared **very religious, very godly**.
- But tragically, **everything was empty form with no substance, because**

They denied the power of godliness.

- They denied the power of true godliness.
 - This is the power of God found in the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - It is only through the gospel that anyone will be godly.
 - It is not through asceticism or legalism or any ism, any **attempted godliness on our part**.
 - But it is only through **the true godliness of Jesus Christ given to those who trust in him, that anyone is saved**.
- Jesus Christ lived a sinless life and offered himself as a sacrifice for our sins.
 - **That is the power of the gospel**, and that is what **brings about salvation and sanctification**.
 - It is only **through the gospel** that men and women can be forgiven for their sins.
 - And it is only through the gospel that we can overcome our sins.
 - **But these false teachers denied this truth**.
- And this was **the “last days” reality that Timothy** was facing in the **Ephesian Church**.
 - And **understand** it's the reality that we are facing in the “last days” of the **contemporary church**.

- **19th century evangelical leader J. C. Ryle** understood this few have. He wrote:

Look in another direction at those hundreds of people whose whole religion seems to consist in talk and high profession. They know the theory of the gospel intellectually and profess to delight in evangelical doctrine. They can say much about the "soundness" of their own views, and the "darkness" of all who disagree with them, but they never get any further! When you examine their inner lives, you find that they know nothing of practical godliness. They are neither truthful, nor charitable, nor humble, nor honest, nor kind-tempered, nor gentle, nor unselfish, nor honorable. What shall we say of these people? They are Christians, no doubt, in name and yet there is neither substance nor fruit in their Christianity. There is but one thing to be said - they are formal Christians. Their religion is an empty form. (J. C. Ryle)

- Just as it was possible to be a member and even a teacher in the church of Ephesus and be lost, **it is possible to be lost in today's church.**
- Unsaved **evangelicals** are a **reality in today's church.**
- Because it is so easy to **show "a form of godliness,"**
- to say and do all the **right Christian things** at church or among true believers.
- While denying the power of godliness in your life.
- Not truly giving your life to Christ and therefore never being transformed by his power.
- And if that is where you find yourself today,
- Then go back to **verse 20 of Chapter 2** and cleanse yourself **from what is dishonorable.**
- That is, stop denying the power of godliness.
- Come to Jesus, repent of your sins, trust in his sacrificial death on the cross in your place that you might be cleansed and made honorable for his purposes.
- For that is the **power of godliness** which results in salvation and true transformation.
- Now back to our passage, **Paul has just described these dishonorable false teachers, their followers, false believers in the church which bring difficulty.**
- **This is what Timothy and we are to understand.**
- And then Paul's **gives his second of two commands in this passage,**
- we are to understand, and we are to...

Avoid such people

- Now this doesn't mean just avoiding their presence but avoiding their **influence and their sin.**
- It also doesn't mean we **let them run free in the church.**
- It means avoiding them by **getting them saved.**
- By gently correcting them so that God may grant them repentance.
- Or if that fails it means getting them out of the church, **or at least out of leadership.**
- Another translation of that **word "avoid" would be "to shun".**
- Timothy must **reject these false teachers** whose words and **lives contradict the gospel.**

- And the same **should be true of us**.
- If there are people in our church (especially leaders) who have the appearance of godliness but not the substance, the power.
- We must **avoid them**; we must get them saved or **reject them as leaders in our body**.
- **OKAY**, so hopefully we better understand the character (or lack of character) of these evil false teachers that we might be set free from their lies, by avoiding such people.
- Paul then emphasizes the need for avoidance by turning to thier...

B. Evil Activity

- Beginning in **verse 6** we read...

⁶ For among them (these false teachers) are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, ⁷ always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth. (2 Timothy 3:6-7)

- Apparently, **at least in Ephesus**,
- These **false teachers** were more successful in **gaining female followers**.
- Weak women or as the NIV translates it (**weak-willed women**).
- In his commentary on **2 Timothy**, George W. Knight, III writes...

The epithet "weak-willed women" is purposely derisive, literally reading "little women." The diminutive is not intended for women in general but describes a situation involving particular women and suggests immature, childish women. (George W. Knight, III)

- Also, the fact that the false teachers "**creep**" suggests **deception**.
- And the **combination** of "**households**" and "**passions**" may hint at **sexual impropriety**.
- These false **teachers may have been physically seducing certain gullible women** in the church.
- But they **were certainly spiritual seducing** them away from **the gospel of Jesus Christ**.
- And **the susceptibility to deception** of **these weak women** should serve as a warning to us **all men and women alike**.
- Paul describes their issues in three ways. **First**, they are...

burdened with sin

- Whether this was sin that they were currently engaged in,
- Or sins of the past, **the text does not tell us**.
- But whatever the case, **their consciences were weighed down by sin**.
- Warning: don't be burdened with sin.
- Take your sin **to Jesus**, asking for forgiveness and the power to overcome.
- The only **solution for the burden of sin is the gospel**.
- For the gospel alone can bring true lasting forgiveness.

- **But instead of seeking mercy and forgiveness from God,**
- these women were captured by creeps, **creeping deceptive false teachers.**
- **Then Second,** these women were...

led astray by various passions

- Instead of **controlling their desires**, they allow **their desires** to control them.
- And apparently these false teachers were deceiving them with promises to ease guilt of their sin.
- While at the same time allowing them to continue or even increase their sinning.
- **Warning:** Control your **passions, don't give into the lust of the flesh.**
- **Third,** their **guilt and passions** had turned them into women who were...

always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth. (2 Timothy 3:7)

- Here, when Paul speaks of **the knowledge of the truth.**
- He means **the knowledge of the true faith in Jesus Christ.**
- Faith that includes **repentance and leads to salvation.**
- But the terrible **reality was that these women** were learning and learning and learning but never **coming to know Jesus.**
- **Warning:** the same thing happens today.
- Some people (men and women) **devote their lives to religious learning.**
- They may go to **church every Sunday**, they may **take copious notes.**
- They may **read and memorize Scripture.**
- They may **even attend Bible College or Seminary.**
- Their heads may be **full of learning about Jesus, about God's word,**
- **Without ever coming to know Him personally.**
- Never coming to **the knowledge of the truth** that they must repent of their sins,
- trust in Christ's sacrificial death on the cross for their sins
- and give their lives completely to HIM.
- So, hopefully we better understand how these false teachers capture susceptible people.
- And so, we can resist such assaults in our lives. **Paul then adds...**

⁸ Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith. (2 Timothy 3:8)

- **Jannes and Jambres** were magicians from Egypt whose names appear in **Jewish tradition** but not in Scripture until here.
- They opposed Moses when he performed signs demonstrating **that he was God's messenger.**
- You can find them (unnamed) in **Exodus Chapters 7 & 8.**
- When Moses threw down Aaron's rod and it became a snake, cast their rods down and they (the rods) also became snakes.

¹² ...But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs. (Exodus 7:12)

- They were also able to reproduce **the first two plagues** that God sent upon Egypt.
- Turning **water into blood and producing frogs**.
- But they couldn't do any of **the rest and so in Exodus 8:19 we read....**

19 Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." (Exodus 8:19)

- But if you read on you will find that even after acknowledging that God was at work these men refused to repent.
- **The false teachers in Ephesus were much the same.**
- Even though they had certainly heard and one time acknowledged the truth.
- Ultimately, **they opposed the truth**, just as the magicians opposed the truth of Moses' message.
- Their **rods looked just like Aaron's, the blood and frogs looked like what God produced.**
- But it was all **false, it was all a deception.**
- And in a similar way, **these false teachers** use the same language of the gospel but with different meanings.
- They may say that Jesus is the savior, **but the question is what does he save you from?**
- The gospel says he saves from sin and death, and he saves **to eternal life with God.**
- But the false teacher may mean he saves you from poverty or oppression or a meaningless life.
- The false teacher can even teach **from the Bible**, picking and choosing verses,
- But using them out of context to make **his point** without ever giving a "full" true picture of what God's word means. **Because they are...**

men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith.

- The minds of these false teachers are corrupted.
- This certainly follows from the description of their character.
- That word corrupted **could also be translated depraved.**
- Their minds are **not right**; their **thinking is not sound.**
- Because their **focus is always on themselves**
- and their desires **are never on God and his purposes.**
- Therefore, they are **disqualified regarding the faith.**
- That word **disqualified** means **unapproved rejected, worthless.**
- Their faith was not in God and **therefore was worthless.**
- What a **scathing inditement** of **these false teachers**, and really all false believers.
- Their character is evil and their activity is evil.
- And because of that they will cause **difficulty in the church.**
- And so again, true believers must understand this.
- We must not be surprised by but prepared for such people.
- We must recognize them and avoid them.
- Avoid their influence in our lives.
- And especially if you are a leader in the church, you must avoid allowing them to influence others.

- **Now so far, our passage has been less than encouraging.**
- Paul has made it clear **that there will be difficulty in the last days,**
- **and we are living in the last day.**
- And that difficulty will be caused **by evil people (false teachers) doing evil things.**
- Deceiving weak willed **people and opposing the truth.**
- But Paul does not leave us in **discouragement he concludes this section with...**

3. The Curtailing (or restricting) of Difficulty

- Yes, there will be difficulty because of these false teachers.

⁹ But (be encouraged) they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men. (2 Timothy 3:9)

- The folly of **Jannes and Jambres** became evident when they could not match the power of **Moses and duplicate all his miracles.**
- Everyone then saw that what they **taught was false** and that they **must not be followed.**
- The same will happen to the false teachers **who oppose Timothy.**
- This was an important word to Timothy, who could only see the false teachers' growing success.
- Paul wanted him to understand that such men **could compete only for so long,**
- and then their **folly would become evident to all.**
- **So, it is today.** There are places where lies seem to be winning,
- Where “Christian” **preachers deny the simple truths contained in God’s word.**
- Where salvation by faith in Christ alone is replaced by a social gospel with a political agenda that is supposed to rescue people from poverty, ignorance, prejudice etc....
- Where God’s love is often **defined as God’s acceptance certain sin.**
- When in fact, His love sent his Son to die to pay the penalty for our sin.
- But in our world and even in the church people are teaching that good is evil and evil is good.
- It’s an upside-down world and the **world is impacting the church.**
- But know this, **it will not last,**
- It will certainly not last forever,
- **for one day Christ will return and defeat all that opposes the true gospel.**
- But, even now, by God’s grace and through his power,
- The folly of today’s false teachers will become clear to everyone.
- Because ultimately there is no power in **their false gospel.**
- Only the **true gospel of Jesus Christ** can bring salvation and **real lasting transformation.**
- False teachers and false gospels will come and go
- but the Gospel of Jesus Christ Remains and continues to be proclaimed in 1,000s upon 1,000s of churches,
- And through the mouths of 10,000s upon 10,000s of true believers.

- And so, I would give one final application.
- The best way to **avoid false teachers and the difficulty they bring.**
- They best way to avoid their influence on your life and in the lives of others.
- **Is to understand (to know) and proclaim the true gospel of Jesus Christ.**

- For against when clearly set against the Gospel, all evil false teaching will be revealed!

Would you pray with me to that end!