

Time Changer or Changed By Time?

2 Thes. 2:3-12

2 Tim 2:1-9

Intro: In the first leg of our **Journey** we have been looking at the sign of spiritual growth. It is the longest leg of our journey because Spiritual Growth is the foundation of the other 6 signs of a true follower of Jesus Christ. This last message will be talking about times, as with any journey we often go from one time zone to another and that is what we are going to look at today as we finish this first leg of the **Journey**. We will do this by asking this question, "Are we really as 'spiritual' as we think we are?"

Is it possible that we have become cold regarding sin? Have we, in the 21st century, become so 'overloaded' by spiritual teachings that we have lost sight of the truth? In our text today the Holy Spirit moves Paul to look into the future to a time when the church will no longer be the spiritual power it was then. He warns of a time when the church will be in a state of Apostasy. Could it be that we are already there? If so how can we avoid being caught up in it and remain faithful?

[Read 2 Tim 2:3-12/pray]

In 2003 the movie **Time Changer** was released. It was a Christian movie set in 1890 at *Grace Bible Seminary*. The two biggest stars in the movie were Hal Lindsey and Gavin MacLeod (Capt of the Love Boat). The storyline is that Professor Russell Carlisle from Grace Bible Seminary is transported from 1890 America to 2003 America. For five days, he finds himself trapped in a wicked world to which you and I have become shamefully accustomed.

In Professor Carlisle’s day the term “Gay Nineties” referred to the nation’s innocence, not the filthy and lewd behavior reflected in our past decade. Men married their wives for life, with divorce rates hovering around 5%. Teenage promiscuity, marital infidelity and abortion were almost nonexistent. Pornography – even if you could find it – was typically an artist’s rendering of a topless woman.

Carlisle’s experiences contrast the difference in morality between the two eras or “Time Zones.” At one point he is sitting in his room watching TV, the blatant immorality and lewd language and behavior that we simply accept as standard for today’s TV shows, is betrayed by the horrified expression on his face as he watches and listens to the garbage that comes out of that little box.

One of the best scenes in the movie is when he goes to the movies with a church group and... It begins with Russell setting in a dark movie theater. **Watch this video it will show what happens.**

Have we arrived at the time the Paul mentions to Timothy? If we are in Apostasy can we turn it around or better still can we avoid the influences of it are remain faithful while others around us fall?

I believe that if we are not now facing the time Paul speaks of we are on the very threshold. I believe there are three basic reasons why the church is standing in the threshold of Apostasy and those same 3 things we must be aware of to avoid falling along with the church.

- I. ***First There Is The Corruption Of The Christians Mind 2 Tim 3:1-9***

- A. Bible scholars agrees the Last Days will be a time of unprecedented evil upon the earth
- B. Few disagree that this evil will also find its way into the professing church before the end arrives
 - 1. Jesus described this time as being like the time of Noah (Matt 24:37)
 - 2. What were the times of Noah like?
 - 3. Gen 6:5 says that during the times of Noah **“...the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually”** and in verse 12 he says that **“...God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth”**
- C. Jesus, in Luke 17:29-30, also likened the time as being like that of Sodom and Gomorrah which Gen 13:13 says were times when the, **“...men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly”**
- D. In 2 Tim 3:1, Paul says that in, **“...the last days perilous times shall come”** then in verse 13 Paul says that in the last days, **“...evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived”**
- E. Peter, in describing the Last Days says that the people will, **“...walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government...selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities”**
 - 1. The Greek [miasmos mee-as-mos] word translated ‘uncleanness’ means ‘that which defiles; vices the foulness of which contaminates one in his contact with the ungodly mass of mankind’
 - 2. When it was later transliterated into the English it took on the idea of a ‘poisonous vapor formerly supposed

to arise from decomposing animal or vegetable matter, swamps, etc and infects the air.'

3. The idea for this term was that there were swamps that would emit noxious, poisonous vapors, if you wandered into one the deadly fog would not only keep you from finding your way out but would slowly poison you.
- F. If this isn't a picture of the spiritual atmosphere you and I live in today I don't know what is
1. Continually breathing in spiritual pollution and becoming far more contaminated by it than we realize
 2. How can we be surrounded by a virtual Sodom and Gomorrah and not be affected by it and concerned about it
 3. 2 of the 3 men on the ballot for SBC president this year hold to some unbiblical beliefs regarding baptism
 4. Most Christians are not nearly as connected to God as they imagine themselves to be
 5. And certainly not as connected as those who came before us – 100 or 150 yrs ago
- G. We cannot imagine how much we are being spiritually polluted by those around us who are regularly engaging in sinful behavior.
- H. We can't help but become blinded to our own spiritual condition because it has come upon us so slowly and subtly
1. The divorce rate in the church has now equaled, and by some accounts has surpassed that of the general public
 2. Abortions are at an alarming rate
 3. Teen pregnancy is as big a problem in the Church and Christians schools as they ever have been

4. Every day we hear of a pastor being arrested for inappropriate touching of children
 5. Pastors are caught up in internet porn or even worse adultery
 - I. No wonder we are where we are considering that on any given Sunday 20% of most Baptist skip church for no other reason than to go to a ball game, work a little extra so they can buy some unneeded thing or just stay home and rest.
 1. What should we expect to be happening when we skip church because we have a runny nose but get up on Monday and go to work with the flu
 2. We are willing to give Jesus and the church He died for one hour a week and believe that is sufficient to be considered ‘spiritual’
 3. If you ask me if you aren’t in church every time the doors are open you need to see a spiritual cardiologist
 - J. Folks, we have to avoid the **Corruption** that many Christian have already been **Corrupted** by.
- II. **Secondly There Is The Corruption Of The Christians**
Power 2 Tim 3:5
- A. As Paul continued to look into the future of the church he not only informed Timothy that the minds of the **Christians would be corrupted** but that the power they rely on would be corrupted as well
 1. At the very least what Paul is saying is that they would be in church but church wouldn’t be in them
 2. They will have the outward trappings of a walk with God but lack the inward reality
 3. It is impossible to know what was actually going through the mind of the old worrier when he wrote about Christians who were content with “a form of godliness.”

4. It does, however, seem evident that as his mind become filled with thought of the Church at the end of the age that he envisioned a majority of churchgoers who would be content with a mere semblance of Christianity
5. The people he saw in his mind's eye would prefer to convey an image to those around them that they were walking with the Lord – even when they really weren't
- B. They could only have arrived at this by being unwilling to allow the Holy Spirit to bring correction into their lives
 1. They live an outward expression of Christianity while resisting the power that comes from a God who desired to do a deep, inward work in their hearts.
- C. In spite of all the large mega churches, and large television ministries there still seems to be a longing in the hearts of true believers to experience God's power – everything points to the fact that the Christians want...
 1. To see something real from the Lord
 2. To hear a fresh word from the Lord
 3. To be touched in the heart by words that have the unction of the Holy Spirit
 4. To sense divine energy moving inside them, invigorating them, empowering them, kindling a new love for Jesus in them
- D. This is exactly what the Scripture promises
 1. The power of the Holy Spirit isn't reserved for a special class of Christian
 2. It isn't restricted to a specific location
 3. God's power is available for us today!
- E. One of the primary functions of God's power is the transformation of sinners into saints
 1. We have at the idea of transformation at length

2. This process of transformation is called sanctification this is the process of taking the common and making it holy
- F. The reason the church today isn't experiencing God's power the way they desire may be because of unconfessed sin in the life of its members
1. If you read 2 Tim 3:1-9 you see that there is a direct connection between the lack of power and sinful behavior.
 2. 1 John 1:8-10 ***"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us"***
 3. The problem in too many churches today is that the Christians have been so corrupted by the uncleanness of the world they live in that they don't even recognize sin in their own life
 - a) If you ask the average Christian if they have sinned they will eagerly tell you yes
 - b) If, on the other hand, you ask them to name the sins they have committed they will find that much harder.
 - c) It is harder because they know they should answer that they have sinned but they really don't believe they do sin – they have lost sight of what God calls sin
 4. Do you realize that according to James, even skipping church is a sin? That's right

- a) The writer of Hebrews commands us to not forsake the assembling together – that is going to church –
 - b) James tells us that if we **“knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin”** (Jam 4:17)
 - c) So even skipping (forsaking) church for no good reason is a sin
5. You may be setting there wondering how I can make such a statements – I’ll tell you.
- a) If Christians today really believed they sinned then the altars of every church would be filled; if not before the service begins certainly at the invitation.
 - b) No, there is nothing special about this altar, but we know that Scripture tells us where two or more are gathered together in His name there He will be also.
 - c) Today, at this time, we are gathered together in His name so we know He is here and where better to confess our sins than today, here when we know He is present.
 - d) Someone said to me not long ago that the reason some people don’t come to the altar during the invitation is because they are afraid that others will think there is some big issue
 - e) I had two things to say to that: 1) who cares what others think? If I am coming to get something right between me and the Lord it doesn’t matter – besides if someone were to think that about someone coming to the altar they need to be right there next to you any way; 2) Since every sin in our life is a big deal to the Lord we are coming to deal with some big issue – its called sin.

- f) All sin is sin that needs confessed and there is no better time or place than here during the invitation.
- G. If you aren’t experiencing the power of God in your life like you would like to then maybe that power is being corrupted by un-confessed sin in your life.

III. ***Finally There Is The Corruption Of The Christians Doctrine***

2 Tim 4:4

- A. In our day of “seeker friendly” and “purpose driven” churches one can find teaching to justify whatever they want to believe.
 - 1. Pastors of these “seeker friendly” and “purpose driven” churches tailor their message to what their congregations want to hear
 - 2. One such pastor even polls his congregation to find out what they were looking for in a church
 - 3. One of the beliefs of these churches is that the pastor focuses only on the positive aspects of God and Christianity – on what the hearer can get out of it
 - 4. “Christian” marketing experts have discovered that lost people are drawn to a message that emphasized the love of God and de-emphasizes His judgment.
 - 5. Bottom line people don’t want to be confronted with their sin
- B. The problem is that doesn’t line up with scripture – Paul told Timothy that “***...the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears*** (2 Tim 4:4)
 - 1. Think about Peter on the day of Pentecost, he accused the very people who called for Christ’s crucifixion of His murder (Acts 2)
 - 2. And when they heard it the Bible says, “***...they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to***

the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37)

3. Peter told them to repent and be baptized.
4. There are far too many ear ticklers preaching today that even the Christian can channel surf until they find a message that aligns with their sin
5. The result is that even if the pastor and leadership of the church works hard at keeping the doctrine pure the beliefs of the people are being corrupted all week long by everything from the church of Ophra to the feel good churches that tell everyone who will listen that every one is born with a spark of God in them
6. One television pastor ends every broadcast this way: *"Do you have a relationship with Jesus Christ? If you aren't sure of this, I'd like the privilege of leading you in a prayer to settle the issue.*

"Dear God, I don't want to waste the rest of my life on the wrong things. Today I want to take the first step in preparing for eternity by getting to know You. Jesus Christ, I don't understand it all, but as much as I know, I want to open my life to You. I ask you to come into my life and make yourself real to me. Thank you amen.

"If you just prayed that prayer for the very first time, I congratulate you. You've just become a part of the family of God."

- C. The prayer may sound good but where is the gut-wrenching examination of their own lives Paul told the Corinthians to do? ***"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your***

own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Cor 13:5)

- D. Without repentance there is no salvation ***"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death"*** (2 Cor7:10)

Conclusion: Paul sends the first 9 verses of 2 Timothy describing the Apostasy but then he spends the last 8 verses tell Timothy how protect himself from it. His bottom line for protection from Apostasy is found in verse 16-17, ***"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: ¹⁷That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works"***

You want to make sure you avoid falling into apostasy – take your spiritual growth more serious and get in the Book and stay in the book. If do stay in the Book then we will begin to see our sins and confession will become a regular part of your attendance because we have spent the week looking into the mirror of God's Word and seeing our self for what we truly are – seeing how our lives line up with the Word of God will always result in conviction, confession and repentance.