*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

March 21 - 26

Letters of Paul

**Monday, March 21 1 Timothy 6:3-5**

“False Teachers”

 There are some who will teach false doctrine, defined as that which runs counter to the teaching of Jesus. It is not so much that these false teachers contradict Christ directly, for that would be easy to show as being against Christ. Rather, their teaching is against the basic concepts and ideas that Christ taught his followers. They pretend to be godly, that is, interested in the things of God, but their true interest is financial gain.

 The person who rejects “healthy” teaching has an “unhealthy” or morbid obsession with controversies and quarrels about words. They enjoy hair splitting fights in which words are the weapons by which they seek to win the day. The five results listed for these quarrels all have to do with disruptions in interpersonal relationships: envy, strife (a contentious disruption of relationships, which often arises from envy), malicious talk (slandering one another), evil suspicion, and constant friction. They are characterized by a corrupt mind, robbed of the truth, and driven by a perverted concept of godliness as a tool to make money.

*May those who teach your Word, Lord, teach rightly and live rightly. Amen.*

**Tuesday, March 22 1 Timothy 6:6-10**

“True godliness with contentment”

 There is great gain in godliness, but it is not of a financial nature. Rather, the gain of a life of godliness is contentment, a sense of happiness and satisfaction with one’s life in Christ. To further his point that financial gain is an unworthy goal of the Christian life, he says essentially, “You can’t take it with you.” He then specifies the essentials necessary for contentment: food and clothing. This embodies Jesus’ strong teaching against greed and trusting God for material needs in Luke 12:13-34 and other places.

 The point of verses 9-10 is not that wealth is wrong but that desire for it is. Three phrases make that clear: (1) “people who *want* to get rich,” (2) “the *love* of money is a root of all kinds of evil,” (3) and “some people, *eager* for money.” The closing words of verse 10 show the interconnectedness between covetousness and departure from the faith. The contrast is clear between the combination of true godliness and faith on the one hand and evil motivation and unbelief on the other.

*Money cannot provide happiness, Lord, but godliness can. Amen.*

**Wednesday, March 23 1 Timothy 6:11-14**

“You, Timothy”

 The apostle is ready to draw his letter to a close. These verses are directed to Timothy, who is to distance himself from the false teachers and continue to live a life dedicated to the Christian faith. As a man of God, he is to flee from the evils mentioned in verses 3-10, and instead run after good. Timothy is to pursue a series of virtues that will help him to maintain the character that Paul has been encouraging throughout the letter.

 “Righteousness” and “a godly life” is the integrity of life displayed by a faithful follower of Christ. “Faith” is a consistent trust in God; “love” is the living out of that trust in relationship with God and others; “perseverance” acknowledges the obstacles that will seek to undermine faith and love; and “gentleness” is the demeanor of quiet strength in the face of obstacles. That strength will be needed in the good fight for the true faith, which can be a fight against outward forces but is always a fight against one’s own worst inclinations. When one practices these virtues, it becomes very difficult for others to find fault with one’s life.

*Give me the strength and desire, Lord, to live these virtues for your sake. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

March 21 - 26

Letters of Paul

**Thursday, March 24 1 Timothy 6:15-16**

“The blessed and only almighty God”

 The praise of God in these verses employs rich, lofty vocabulary to exalt God. It is introduced by a statement that reflects the previous reference in verse 14 to the second coming of Christ. The sovereignty of God is emphasized, for he is the one who will bring about that appearing. He is the only Ruler; he is the only God. Another unique characteristic of God is his immortality. Only God is not subject to death.

 This is the God who lives in light that cannot be approached. The light of God exposes all that is evil. He is surrounded by light and dressed in a robe of light. Moreover, God would not let Moses look directly at his face, for no one may see God and live. That fact is reinforced by Paul here. Just as human beings do not have immortality by nature but are granted this by grace, so those who have been unable to see because of sin will one day be like him when he appears, “for we shall then see him as he is” (1 John 3:2). These realities are exclusively true of God. Therefore, he deserves honor and glory forever.

*I praise you, Lord, blessed and almighty, as the only true God. Amen.*

**Friday, March 25 1 Timothy 6:17-19**

“Words to the wealthy”

 It may seem strange that Paul returns to the subject of wealth in this paragraph, having already dealt with it in verses 6-10. We know, however, that the early Christian churches did not lack members of the upper, wealthier class. In whatever way they may have gained their wealth, possibly before they became believers, they now had it and needed instructions as to how to use it. (1) Such people are to recognize that wealth is temporary and will last only until the appearing of Christ just alluded to in the previous verses. (2) They should not be arrogant. (3) They are not to put their hope in wealth, because that is so uncertain.

 This warning is followed by a strong “but” and the positive instruction that responds to the three negatives point by point: their hope is to be in God, he is the one who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment, and instead of being arrogant they are to do good and to be generous and willing to share. All of this is set within the anticipation of the coming age marked by the appearing of Christ in God’s own time.

*Show me how to be generous with what you have given me, Lord. Amen.*

**Saturday, March 26 1 Timothy 6:20-21**

“In conclusion”

 Verse 20 begins a final personal word to Timothy. It is difficult to know what was entrusted to him. In the present context it may refer to the endowment Timothy was given when hands were laid on him. But immediately after telling Timothy to guard that which was entrusted to him, Paul writes about turning away from what is falsely called knowledge. This command seems to be a summary of all the teachings in the letter to follow truth and oppose heresy. If so, probably what was entrusted and to be guarded carefully was the sound teaching Timothy had received from Paul. It is especially important for Timothy to do this because some have embraced falsehood and wandered from the faith.

 We, like Timothy, have a trust to guard carefully the sound teaching of Scripture. In the process of discharging that trust, we, like him, must be careful not to engage in the kinds of dissension and argumentation employed by false teachers. And, with Timothy, we are called to pray for those who teach what is falsely called knowledge, that they may know the truth.

*I pray for those, Lord, whose eyes Satan has blinded to the truth. Amen.*