



Held by HIS Word in Uncertain Times
LWQ Bible Study

Opening Prayer: Blessed Lord, open our hearts and minds to hear Your Word, to be strengthened in our faith, to live always in the hope that, by Your Word, You will sustain us unto the end that we may be with You eternally. In Jesus' name. Amen.

One need not look too hard to see that much of our world appears to have come unmoored from the Word of God. This is evidenced most clearly by the growing hostility people have toward all things Christian, and the kinds of teachings with which they are willing to align themselves, in hopes of finding meaning, purpose, and hope. Because of this, even the most faithful Christian can have a sense of uncertainty as we move through this often chaotic world.

In this second letter, St. Paul continues to encourage Timothy, a young pastor of the Church, as he faithfully serves the people of Crete. As a pastor, Paul warns Timothy that things will not always be easy, for any work done amongst sinners is bound to cause offense, and, perhaps, even times of persecution. With this in mind, St. Paul seeks to prepare Timothy for what is to come, and how he can face these things with the confidence that Christ gives.

Part 1: What is coming? Read 2 Timothy 3:1–5.

Paul points to a number of things that are going to happen. Name at least three of them. _____
_____ What does the occurrence of such things indicate (3:1)? _____

¹For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, ⁴treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power.

These things are an indication that the last days are upon us.

According to **2 Timothy 4:3–4**, what else will happen that will usher in the last days? _____

³For the time is coming when people will not endure sound^[a] teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, ⁴and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. ⁵As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

People will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions.

In **2 Timothy 4:6**, what do you think Paul means that the time of his departure has come? _____

⁶For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.
He believes the time of his own death is near.

In all these warnings, Paul is trying to show Timothy that an urgency is needed when proclaiming the Gospel, for the last days are upon them. Additionally, Paul senses that his own death is near, and so he seeks to prepare and equip Timothy as much as possible before that happens. This, too, is why Paul speaks in such an urgent manner.

Part 2: Sound familiar?

As Paul describes what is to take place, certainly we can see a lot of these things happening all around us. Look again at **2 Timothy 3:1–5**. Give some specific examples of how you see some of these things being played out in today’s world? _____ How about in your own life?

Some examples of this include: difficult times; cafeteria Christians who pick and choose what parts of the Word they like; postmodern philosophy; social justice warriors; political anger; etc. Other answers based upon current events are possible. Specifics events from one’s own life may vary.

Far from being a simple warning to Timothy, Paul’s words also speak directly to us. His words not only highlight things still happening around us, but also call us to examine our own lives to see how we have despised God’s Word, sought out teachers who tell us what we want to hear, chosen to follow the portions of Scripture that we like while discarding the rest, and struggled to stay between faithfulness and personal desires. We are not only living in the last days, but, by our own sinfulness, we are part of ushering in those last days ourselves!

Part 3: What do we do about this and why can we trust it? Read **2 Timothy 3:10–15**.

Paul is recommending a “back to basics” approach to the Scriptures. What two things, specifically, should Timothy consider to accomplish this? _____ Who has helped to form you in the faith in your life? _____ What did they do to help point you to the Scriptures? _____ How have you taken what you have learned from them and used it still today?

¹⁰ You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, ¹¹ my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. ¹² Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, ¹³ while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. ¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom^[a] you learned it ¹⁵ and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

The two things Timothy can consider are what he has learned from Paul himself, and what he has learned from his mother and grandmother as he grew up. Answers may vary in the last two questions based upon personal experience.

Read **2 Timothy 3:16–17**. Why is Scripture something that can be trusted? _____

¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God^[b] may be complete, equipped for every good work. Scripture can be trusted because it is from God, not from man. It is breathed out by God himself.

Breathed out by God is the way that many translations render this phrase, yet it is actually a joining together of two words, “God” and “Spirit.” Thus, the Word is literally “God-Spirited” (or God-breathed) to us. What does this say about the power of the Word that has been given to

us? _____ How is that comforting when facing the uncertainties of the world about which Paul warns? _____

The power of the Word is based upon the power and authority of God and is effective as the Spirit works through that Word in the lives of those who encounter it. When we face uncertainties, it is comforting to know that God's Word has the power to overcome it and to keep us fixed upon the things that are eternal.

Paul lists four benefits of this God-breathed Word. What are they? _____
What does each one mean for us, specifically? _____

The Word of God is profitable for: 1) Teaching, which means that it is true, eternal, and living; 2) Reproof, meaning that it is able to refute lies both that the world tries to teach and the falsities that are taught within religion; 3) Correction, which sounds a bit like "reproof" but in truth it is more like restoration or forgiveness or to bring someone to an upright position after being in a fallen state. This Word is regenerative! And, 4) Training, which comes from the word for training children, and so training in righteousness is to be brought into the truth that we are justified by grace with faith taking hold of that wonderful promise.

Part 4: What is the result of all this?

Paul suggests that there are two results from returning to God's Word, two things the Word accomplishes in us (see verse 17). What are they? What does it mean that we are competent, or complete? What does it mean that we are equipped for every good work? In what ways does the Word help you in living out your faith daily?

The two things this Word accomplishes in us is that we are made competent, or complete, and equipped for every good work. We are competent, or complete, because without the Word, we are less than who were made to be. We are incomplete. We are equipped for good works as we are shaped by the Word that we hear, and in that shaping, we are sent out into the world to bear witness to Jesus in Word and deed. That is how the Word helps us live out our faith daily, for it shapes us and forms us in the likeness of Christ. Other answers may vary.

Notice Paul speaks of being "equipped" for good work. This means that without the Word, we are incomplete and are not the full person God intends us to be. This sometimes leads us to be hesitant, not only in dwelling in the Word ourselves, but also in sharing the Word with others. We feel inadequate for the task. However, the promise that God gives us is that we are already equipped for this evangelistic task, and the effectiveness is not up to us and our cleverness, but upon God's work of making Christ known through the Word. How does this comfort you when you are called upon to bear witness to Christ? _____

We are comforted by the fact that, because God's Word is powerful and that God is the One doing the work and He will work faith, by His Spirit, as he sees fit and as it pleases Him. Thus, our task is simply to connect people to Jesus by His Word, and leave the worry and the work to God.

Held by HIS Word

In the face of uncertain times, people will look to many, different things to try and find a way to face them with confidence or remain strong through them. Apart from the Word of God though, nothing is truly certain and nothing else is enduring. However, we have the eternal Word as a gift from our heavenly Father. And, as John reminds us (John 1:1–3), that Word is none other than Christ himself — Who not only upholds us in the midst of life’s uncertainties, but also wins the victory for us by His death and resurrection. Thus, come what may, we can know for certain, by faith, we shall be held by Him eternally!

Closing Prayer: Almighty and Eternal God, by Your grace You give us Your Word as a sure and certain strength and truth in the face of so many things that are uncertain in the world. Keep us steadfast in the faith that we may daily cling to Your Word so that, in the end, we may pass with You through death into the unending life that Christ has gained for us. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Closing Hymn: Sing or say together verses 1, 5, and 6 of “The Law of God Is Good and Wise,” (LSB #579; LW #329; TLH #295).