



Held by HIS Word in Uncertain Times

BY REV. BRIAN NOACK



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 hope of finding meaning, purpose, and hope. Because of this, even the most faithful Christians can have a sense of uncertainty as we move through this often-chaotic world.

In this second letter, 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, 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)?

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

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

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? _____

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? _____

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

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 “Spirited” 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? _____

Paul lists four benefits of this God-breathed Word. What are they? _____

What does each one mean for us, specifically? _____

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? _____

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?

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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).

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