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Sunday 7 February 2010

# Mentoring



2 Timothy 3  
When the Going  
Gets Tough

## Living in Tough times

We are in the last days – it began with the resurrection and will continue until Jesus returns. So when is Paul describing, the present for him and yet there is timelessness to this and it sounds like today. This highlights that whilst there are many advances in our understanding, human nature remains constant. It has a flaw and it is only Jesus who is able to bring healing.

- *What people can be like 1-4*

<sup>1</sup> But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. <sup>2</sup> People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, <sup>3</sup> without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, <sup>4</sup> treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—

Paul highlights how it is possible to live selfish lives and to some extent we see this in our world today. Some of these characteristics may have been true of us before discovering the love of God. As Christians it is still possible to be like this when we allow selfishness to take over in our lives.

- *People*

*Bringing blessing* – Paul in 1 Timothy 1 highlights what Jesus has done for us.

<sup>9</sup> For God saved us and called us to live a holy life. He did this, not because we deserved it, but because that was his plan from before the beginning of time—to show us his grace through Christ Jesus.

Paul acknowledges the blessing that Timothy brings

<sup>3</sup> Timothy, I thank God for you..... <sup>5</sup> I remember your genuine faith, for you share the faith that first filled your grandmother Lois and your mother, Eunice. And I know that same faith continues strong in you.

*Causing problems*

<sup>5</sup> having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them. <sup>6</sup> They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, <sup>7</sup> always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth. <sup>8</sup> Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these men oppose the truth— men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected.

Paul goes back to the time of the Exodus and describes two of the Egyptian magicians, they caused trouble for Moses (Jewish tradition gives them names). These two represent others who are opposing the purposes of God. Paul in chapter 2.17 writes of Hymenaeus and Philetus, who through their wrongful teaching about the resurrection were destroying people's faith. In chapter 4.10 Paul speaks of Demas deserting him because of his love for the world and then in 4.14 Alexander the coppersmith who did him great harm.

*Paul's experience of persecution v11-12 (see also Acts 13 & 14)*

In Pisidian Antioch – Paul is persecuted by the Jews and expelled from the region. In Iconium - Paul preached in the synagogue many Jews and Gentiles

believed. Other Jews were resistant and plotted to persecute and stone Paul and Barnabas – they escaped.

In Lystra a crippled man was healed. Again those Jews who persecuted Paul did so again and here Paul was stoned by the crowd and left for dead.

Paul also emphasised that persecution was a common experience for a Christian.

In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, 2 Tim 3.12

### **Persevering in Tough Times**

Paul and Barnabas did not give up despite persecution; they kept going and even went back to these young churches to strengthen them. Paul was conscious of the Lord's activity – he was in God's hands and he was able to keep going because it was God who strengthened him.

Persecutions, sufferings--such as occurred to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra, persecutions I endured, but out of them all the Lord delivered me. 2 Timothy 3.11.

..Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, <sup>22</sup>strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. Acts 14.21

I can do everything through him who gives me strength. Phil 4.13

Timothy himself had strong foundations laid in his life. Paul reminds Timothy of this and in doing so provides inspirational teaching about the Bible.

<sup>14</sup> But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, <sup>15</sup> and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup> All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

The Bible is not just any book its God breathed, it's a book that is fully human and yet fully divine. Its words can help us to discover the Living Word – Jesus, and it is able to equip us for life.

