

A Father's Farewell

2nd Timothy

Fighting the Good Fight for the Faith - Part 1

Key idea:

To protect a local church from false teaching, leaders must work hard to teach the truth, focusing on the great doctrines of God's Word and avoiding useless controversies, and back up their teaching with the power of a godly life.

Key text:

2 Timothy 2:14-26

Keep reminding them of these things. Warn them before God against quarreling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen. ¹⁵ Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. ¹⁶ Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. ¹⁷ Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, ¹⁸ who have wandered away from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some. ¹⁹ Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness." ²⁰ In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. ²¹ If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work. ²² Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. ²³ Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. ²⁴ And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. ²⁵ Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, ²⁶ and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

Key points:

1. The best protection against false teaching is the positive preaching of God's Word, which must be done in a sustained, consistent, and careful manner. A leader must carefully study and proclaim God's Word to protect the body from the infection of false teaching.

2. To consistently teach the great truths of God's Word, the church must not become distracted by secondary or tertiary issues, which are at best a fruitless distraction and at worst eventually draw people away from the truth and degrade the character of those participating.
3. To protect the church from false teachings, leaders must back up the teaching of God's Word with the example of a godly life.
4. Leaders who watch their life and doctrine closely, persevering in them, are promised that this will save themselves and the congregation from the infection of false, destructive teaching.

Questions for discussion/application:

1. What part of Sunday's text and teaching stood out most to me? Why?
2. Why does Paul use medical terminology like sound/healthy teaching and the gangrene of false teaching? Why is this particularly appropriate when thinking of a church?
3. Why is a positive focus on teaching the essential truths of God's Word the first and most important way to protect the church from the infection of false teaching? Can I think of examples in other areas where the "best defense is a good offense"?
4. Why is Paul so worried about quarreling, godless chatter, and foolish and stupid arguments in the Pastoral Epistles (see 1 Timothy 6:4, 20; Titus 3:9; 2 Timothy 2:14, 16, 23, 25-26)?
5. When I think of much of the discourse in our culture at present, how much of it do I think could be classified as "quarreling, godless chatter, and foolish and stupid arguments"? Am I ever tempted to be drawn into such quarrels?
6. Why does Paul place so much stress on Timothy cultivating a godly character and lifestyle?
7. How important is character for a leader in the church? For a leader in business? For a leader in government? Do these all require the same level of character, or could one serve well as a leader in business or government but be unqualified for leadership in the church? Why or why not?
8. Can I think of leaders in the church who displayed godly character but who taught false doctrine? What effect did this have on the church?

9. Can I think of leaders in the church who taught solid doctrine but who did not have godly character? What effect did this have on the church?
10. How can I as a church member encourage local churches to have leaders who watch their life and doctrine closely? What should I do if I am ever in a church where the leaders fail in one or both of these areas?
11. Who will I call to encourage this week? What specific members of BRCC will I commit before God to pray for and call?

Preview of Next Week: Fighting the Good Fight for the Faith - Part 2 (2 Timothy 2:14-26)