

Flee (2 Tim. 2)

Part 1

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[00:00:01] Will you come again, please, to 2 Timothy, chapter 2.

We'll read from verse 19.

Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord loatheth them that are his, and that every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth, and some to honour and some to dishonour.

If a man therefore purchase himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meek for the master's use, and prepared for every good work.

Flee also youthful lusts, but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, [00:01:01] with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Tonight we want to concentrate on verse 22.

We've travelled a little from verse 19 back to verse 22, and 21 I should say, and tonight we want to complete the exercise with this 22nd verse. There is more in the verse than we're able to cover, but we'll try and point out the various features that are worthwhile mentioning. For instance, there's a great deal that could be said about fleeing. A great deal in Scripture reminds us of the necessity of flying. Certain situations demand a standing.

Certain situations refer to walking, but there are many, many passages that encourage us to flee. [00:02:04] I think we mentioned one during the week about Joseph, when he was being seduced by Potiphar's wife, he fled.

He knew it was a situation that he had to leave as quickly as possible. We remember an occasion when David the king was being rejected, and we read again and again the passage, he fled. He knew that at that particular moment the enemies against him were stronger than himself and those who were with him, and so he fled, knowing that the time would come when God would restore him to his rightful anointed place as king. These are only two occasions, there are many more. Then when we read about youthful lusts, and I want to say something about that. That is a very, very great subject, and one worth considering. [00:03:01] Then there is this matter of following, or pursuing.

And that of course itself is a great subject in Scripture too. Pursuing things that are worthwhile. And then we end up with calling on the Lord, and calling the Lord out of a pure heart. So there is a tremendous amount in this verse, and I don't think we'll have time to go through all of it, but we'll concentrate on what is on one's heart. We've seen that it's possible for a Christian to get into a place of privilege and honor before the Lord, in separating from known sin, whether moral or ecclesiastical, and being in a place of honor before the Lord. Now that's a very honored place indeed.

But more is required.

There are more features that are necessary to be followed. [00:04:03] Things to be given up.

Things to follow.

And that's what I want to concentrate on tonight. Now when Paul says, flee youthful lusts, we mustn't think that he's having a dig at young people.

The fact is that youthful lusts are a very uncomfortable habit of lingering on into old age. They don't disappear in youth.

Very, very often they're there right to the end of our lives. If we don't conquer them in the power of the Holy Spirit. So when Paul says, flee also youthful lusts, he's telling us all, young and old alike, not to be governed with those indiscretions that mark youth, those failures that mark youth, but to leave them behind and to go on to maturity and so be a blessing for the Lord.

[00:05:06] Youthful fleeing is an energetic attitude.

You don't sit down quietly and hope that they'll go away. No, sin is much more powerful than that.

You have to flee from it.

Leave it.

Overcome it. Get away from it as quickly as possible. And if you don't, you'll succumb to it.

Now I want to show from the Bible what Paul is referring to when he speaks about youthful lusts. Unfortunately, we're going to concentrate on what is negative, but we hope it will lead to something positive. Youthful lusts have to be identified. No good the statement being before us, youthful lusts, and it's vague in our minds. What does it mean? Well, we turn to the Bible and we find concrete evidence to show us what Paul means when he speaks about youthful lusts. [00:06:07] And if we who are older look into our hearts, we'll certainly identify these things in our own lives, that they haven't gone, not by any means. They're still with us and they have to be conquered. My first reference is after King Solomon died.

You remember his son inherited the kingdom from him.

He also inherited a very severe form of taxation on the nation.

And there were those who were deeply concerned about this levy and they wanted it lessened. That's

a very modern idea, that income tax and its problems. Anyway, the king, he asked advice right away.

He asked the older brothers, what should I do?

[00:07:04] Well, the older brothers told him, now just be careful and if you can't lessen the levy, the people will appreciate that. It will indicate that you're concerned about them. You remember this was one of the outstanding features in Solomon. He was concerned about getting wisdom, that he might rule the people of God for God's pleasure and for their benefit. That was the father's desire, but the son, he had those desires. Well, he listened to the old men and then he said, I'll listen to the young men and see what they have to say. They were brought up with him, presumably his playmates of youth and teenage character. They were before him, they were in favoured places in his council. And they had no wisdom, no desire.

What they said, lessen the levy? Not at all. Add to the burden.

[00:08:04] Your father chastised them with whips, you chastise them with scorpions. That's the way to deal with them. And he listened to the advice of the young men. And what happened?

Division.

Sorrow.

A break up in the nation of Israel that was never prepared.

Simply because young men, without any feeling, without any understanding, without any wisdom, without any discernment, advised the king wrongly. Ah, they thought they knew.

They thought they knew the answer, but they didn't. I think you'll find, generally speaking, wisdom is with those who are older, maturity, experience. Not always, but generally speaking, you will find that's true. [00:09:04] Well, there's one failure of young people.

Head strong, lacking in discernment, lacking in knowledge, lacking in feeling.

My next preference is to the sons of Levi, of Nih and Phinehas.

The father was aged, his eyes were dim.

I think his physical condition indicated the decadent period in which he lived. Israel was in a very low state indeed. So was the high priest, Eli.

Then we find that his two sons, of Nih and Phinehas, they behaved in an abominable way. They despised the offerings of the Lord. They did what was contrary.

They were grossly immoral. [00:10:02] And their condition was such that the offerings were held in disrespect, and the priesthood had sunk to a very low level. Young men, good father, excellent position, privileged to be priests, and yet their conduct was shameful.

What does this tell us? Well, first of all, it tells us about being in a certain position without the

condition that is proper to it.

Many young people have been brought up in Christian homes with excellent opportunities, excellent parents.

They've sat under excellent ministry, and unfortunately it has all gone over their heads. Very, very sad.

And following lives of sin which have been shameful.

[00:11:05] Now that was the case with Hofmeyr and Phinehas, and it's not unusual in the Christian testimony. And what I'm pointing out is, for young people as well as for all of us, that it's one thing to be in a certain position. It's another thing to be in the proper condition that is consistent with that position. Now that's always true for everyone of us.

If the Queen has an ambassador and she sends him to represent her in some other country, she expects a rectitude of life in that man because he is representing her, her interests.

And we've known in many cases in our times where people in responsible positions have discredited their office by their gross immoral behavior. [00:12:01] Now the same is true to the Christian position. We have a far greater and more glorious person to represent in our Lord Jesus Christ. And it's not enough to be in a position. It's not enough to be breaking bread. It's not enough to be known as a Christian. There is a life that is proper to that position, a life that demands a proper testimony to our Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, how important this is.

A youthful desire to please oneself.

That's what we find in Hofmeyr and Phinehas. They shame their father, and they shame their office, and they knock the glory of God down.

In a practical way, I mean. The glory of God is beyond them, and by the way, it's the way He is in glory. But in a practical way, they disgrace the God of Israel. [00:13:02] Solemn, solemn words that these young men, Hofmeyr and Phinehas, behave in that awful way. What a disgrace to their father. What a disgrace to their office as priests. What a disgrace to the God of glory who had blessed them in such a wonderful way. When we come to the time of Elijah, we find that one day the sons of the prophets, young men, they are sent out to gather some food.

And one young man, he goes out and he gathers some wild fruit. Colossus, I think they're called. And they put it into the pot.

And then the pot's boiling away, ready to be served.

And then suddenly someone discovers that the food is unpalatable. It's poisonous. Oh thou man of God, they said, there's death in the pot. [00:14:05] Someone without knowledge put into the pot something that was poisonous. They didn't know and they didn't realize the damage that they were doing. And so this young man was irresponsible.

Was in a position to supply something and was unable to do it.

He did the wrong thing instead of doing the right thing. And so every one of us, young and old alike, middle-aged too, we are all responsible to provide that which is palatable. That which is good for food. That which is nourishing. That which strengthens us. Rather than something that's poisonous. And my, it's easy to put in something that's poisonous into the Christian company. Many people ask me as I go around, what's wrong with our meetings today?

[00:15:05] We're declining in numbers.

Meetings are dying out.

And of course, we can all give our own particular reasons. The truth is that there are many reasons. There are many reasons. It would be utmost stupidity to go to the government or the hospital and say, is there one particular disease that fills all the beds up in the hospital? That would be ludicrous. You know, there are many, many diseases that cause those beds to be filled up in hospitals. So it is with the declension today. But there's one thing and it's real poison. I want to say to all solemnity and sobriety that one of the worst things is the tongue. The book of Proverbs tells us about the tailgaters, the slanderers, the poison givers, pouring poison into the ears, spreading it around, misrepresentation. [00:16:07] One of the saddest things amongst the people of God, it's poison, absolute poison, and doesn't do the least bit of good. Oh, if we only prayed more about the difficulties amongst the saints, if we showed more love amongst the saints, that would be more powerful, more beneficial than the use of the tongue in the wrong way. I commend to you the reading of the book of Proverbs. And just take your pencil and note the occasions when the tongue is used in a wrong way, and you'll be astounded. And at the same time, just note how many times the tongue is used in a correct way, and you'll find that the number of times it's used in a wrong way is more than double the times it is used in a right way. Very, very solemn.

[00:17:02] Would that be true of you and me? That we use our tongue twice as often in a bad way as we do in a right way? Solemn thing if that's true. Youthful lusts.

My young people can be irresponsible and so can old people. And these things, we have to flee from them in order to be a true and upright servant for God in these difficult times. The lips of a righteous man feed many.

We have to follow after righteousness. That's the kind of thing that we find. I have no intention of saying that tonight, but it's borne in upon my soul. Follow after righteous speaking. Pure speaking.

Speaking that will help forward the things of God. Don't inject poison amongst the saints of God by the wrong use of your tongue. [00:18:01] Well, the man of God was able to rectify that position, and that food was palatable, and they all enjoyed it.

You remember when Naaman the Syrian was healed?

Naaman wanted to give the prophet Elijah a present.

Elijah, rather, a present because he'd been healed.

And the prophet said, no, I don't want any benefit for what I've done. God has done this, not me.

And after he went away, the young man, Dehazer, he said, oh, how foolish.

What a chance he had.

There was an opportunity to get some clothes and get some money. So away he goes to Naaman, and he told lies.

[00:19:03] And he told them because he was greedy. He wanted to take advantage of what had been done for the Lord, and he told Naaman a pack of lies, and he got the clothes, and he got the money, and he thought he had done fine. He thought nobody knew about it. And when he got back to the prophet, the prophet, he challenged him immediately. What he had done was he had to confess, and then he suffered the consequences. He was a leper until the day of his death.

Young people, I want to exhort you.

Be careful what you do in your lives.

Unfortunately, things that you can do in your youth can affect you all the rest of your life. Be careful.

Dehazer told lies, and he was greedy.

They were youthful lusts. They were wrong things to do.

[00:20:01] God upon himself, God's government, and it was with him, and it never left him. I think later on he does testify as to the worth of the prophet, but by his wrongdoing, he suffered the consequences. A youthful lust.

Very, very sad indeed.

Oh, how easy it is to give way to those things. Youthful lusts, that's not only amongst young people.

That's not only the fault of a man like Dehazer. It can be the fault of every one of us, to be actuated by greed, to be actuated by lies. Easiest thing in the world to give way to these things, and they're not on in the Christian testimony.

Very, very wrong.

We should give ourselves to these things. To get money by unrighteous means, to tell lies in order to obtain that money, definitely not for a Christian.

[00:21:01] Very, very wrong indeed. Whether we're young, middle-aged, or old.

I want now to come to the New Testament.

In the last chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, we find the Lord Jesus talking to Peter.

And he says, Peter, do you remember when you were young? You see, he's getting him back to his young days. How did you act when you were young? Why, he says, you went wherever you wanted

to go. You did whatever you wanted to do. You said whatever you wanted to say. I think we could read into the Lord's words these things. When you were young, you guilted yourself, you served yourself, you pleased yourself. He says, when you get old, another will guilt you. And he says, this is in reference to your death, by which you'll glorify God. [00:22:02] He'll take you where you don't want to go. But we kind of miss what the Lord says.

When you were young, you pleased yourself.

I think we can all look into our hearts. When we were young, we did the same. I did. I thought I could please myself. Go wherever I wanted to go. Do whatever I wanted to do. Say whatever I wanted to say. It's a feature of self-will.

But that's not right for a Christian. Thank God when we come under the subduing power of the Lord Jesus, the gift of the Holy Spirit is such that he produces in us better desires, not to please ourselves.

Free also you from lust, says Paul. Why, Timothy?

You can't please yourself if you're a vessel to honour. You can't please yourself if you're here for the master's use. [00:23:01] You can't do that, Timothy.

And the Lord is saying that to you and to me, every one of us.

Weigh carefully what you do, where you go, what you say. Ask the Lord if it's his will.

Pray every morning to be kept from sin.

Pray every morning to have the Lord's will, what you're to do, what you're to say, where you're to go. You might do many things in ignorance, but the more you pray, the more you ask the Lord's guidance, the more help you'll be given to do his will. Self-will is not for a Christian. That's why we find those words in the 12th of Romans where Paul exhorts the believer to give his life over to God to do God's will.

And then when he does that, he finds himself in company with others, members of the body of Christ. And I think we'll find exactly the same principle here [00:24:02] in a few moments.

That when we do what's right, when we flee useful lusts, we fall with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart, features of positive blessing and features of positive worth in destiny for Christ. Righteousness, faith, peace, and love.

There was another young man.

We find Stephen the martyr dying.

There's a young man standing there. He's called Saul of Tarsus.

He's quite unmoved by the sight of the Lord's servant being murdered. The stones are battering his life out, although he accepts that from the Lord. As his Lord, into thy hands I commit my spirit. And

that deprived the murderers of the glory of taking his life from him. [00:25:04] Stephen gave his life into the hands of the Lord. Nevertheless, they were responsible for this terrible act. Saul of Tarsus was standing there quite unmoved. Gave his vote against Stephen.

Was there an accessory to the fact that later on in his life he confessed and said, I was an injurious man.

I compelled many to blaspheme.

And I had the feeling that that would live with Paul, great servant of the Lord as he was for the rest of his life. The fact that he had compelled people to blaspheme against the name of Christ. What a sorrowful thing. And after he got converted, why his great desire was to serve Christ, to love Christ, and to glorify Christ. What a man he was, the Apostle Paul. [00:26:02] But, at that particular moment, as a young man, he was callous, he was cruel, he was unfeeling, he was unmoved by the sufferings of others. Oh, that we might be spared from that kind of attitude, whether we are young or old.

There's a proverb, I cannot put my finger upon it, I cannot quote it correctly, but the gist of the proverb is, don't rejoice in disasters, don't be a sensationalist, and rejoice because people are passing through terrible privations. What you say, is that possible? Unfortunately it is.

That's how a sadist views things.

He's rejoicing because there is evil, there is suffering, there is destruction. He glories in this.

What a sad thing that a Christian should be moved in that kind of way. A Christian should be feeling concerned about the sufferings of others. [00:27:05] You see, to be a vessel from the Master, is to be like the Master himself. He was moved with compassion.

He was concerned about the suffering of others, concerned about the well-being of others. How feeling-hearted the Master was, and how feeling-hearted we should be.

One last reference, and it's in the letter by John, his first epistle.

You remember he says to the young men, particularly the young men, love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. All that's in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.

I wonder, every one of us here, middle-aged, old, and young, [00:28:03] would we all say that we're all free from the influences of the world? If we were true and honest, would we not say it's so easy to succumb to the pleasures, the entertainment, the interests that are in the world? Oh, how easy it is to succumb to these things. But the young men, particularly, are warned. And looking back, one can see how one was deeply influenced by many things when one was young.

How easy to succumb and fall into the prevailing notions of the day. But, says John, young men, you're strong. The Word of God abides in you. You are exercised. You do want to get on for the Lord. Mind the world. Beware. The world is a powerful place, dominated by Satan, the ruler of it.

[00:29:01] Oh, what a terrible place it is. However attractive it might be to the human eye, however

much it might have to offer in a natural way, oh, it's a dangerous place for a Christian. And he needs to be guided against it every day of his life, and not succumb to its evil influences, and to shun it, to avoid it, and find his joy in another world, a world where Christ is supreme.

Young men, don't love the world. Don't succumb to its influences. Middle-aged men and women, old-aged men and women, the Lord is to us all, every one of us. Don't let the world have any place in our lives. Its principles, its politics, anything you like that belongs to this world, dominated by its ruler, Satan.

The Christian, the vessel, meat for the mass profuse, he avoids it, and he seeks to be triumphant in it. [00:30:03] This is the faith that helps us to overcome the world, the faith that we have in the Son of God. He is the only one who is competent to help us to overcome the ruler of this world. Only the Son of God is capable of dealing with him, and helping us to overcome its power and influence.

Now we want to speak about what is positive. Flee also youthful lusts, and pursue, that's the word for follow, that's the real meaning, pursue, energetic following, pursue, and it mentions the things that we are to pursue, righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

You remember one of the previous verses, [00:31:03] Paul exhorted Timothy and us to depart from iniquity.

Now the meaning of that word iniquity is unrighteousness.

Now says Paul to Timothy, we are not going to succumb to iniquity, what is unrighteous, we are going to follow righteousness. That means doing what is right in the sight of God.

Now it takes us a little time to learn these things, we don't learn them if we are newly converted, we don't learn them all in one night. We grow in the knowledge of what is pleasing to the Lord. But if we love him for what he has done for us, we are anxious to learn. And step by step as we wait upon him, he teaches what is right in his sight. [00:32:01] Now it's important to keep in mind that righteousness is what is right according to God.

Not right according to fluctuating standards, standards that were all like 50 years ago but are no use now, standards that are being put forward today that will be rejected in a short time, not those kind of standards.

Things that are right before God.

And of course the more we read the word of God, the more we learn what is right in his eyes.

Now the Lord Jesus, we were singing about him and we prayed that we might be like him, we prayed this in our song, he loved righteousness, he loved to do what was right.

And you find him in the synagogue as a little boy, that was the right place for him to go, the word of God was read there.

[00:33:01] For those of us who are Christians, a right thing to gather together with Christians, gather to the Lord's name, it's simplicity and yet understanding what we are doing, gathering to the Lord's

name, right thing to do. A right thing as Christians to be baptized, a right thing to remember the Lord, a right thing to avoid sin, a right thing to worship, to pray, the positive features, right thing to testify from Christ to the unconverted, right thing to try and help other Christians, oh there are so many, many things that we can do that are right in the sight of God.

Let me refer to Solomon again.

My, Solomon, what a grand opportunity. God said, Solomon, I love you so much.

Remember, God changed his name, Judea, beloved of the Lord. He said, Solomon, I love you so much, [00:34:03] just ask what you will and I'll give it to you. My, what a chance.

I wonder what we would have asked for. Well, Solomon said, I would like wisdom.

I would like to be able to rule my people correctly.

My, that was the right thing to do. And God said he was pleased with what Solomon asked. And not only did he give him that wisdom, but he gave him riches, and he gave him fame, and he gave him power. Now, I believe these are the things that man generally would ask for. And God gave them to Solomon, but he gave him wisdom, what he asked for, so that his people might be ruled right. Oh, what a wonderful thing to be able to ask right things from the Lord. And to ask them with specific desire, real desire.

Lord, I want this, not for myself, [00:35:04] but for the Christian testimony. Pursue it. Pursue righteousness.

It's something to be followed, energetically acquired. Pursue it with all the energy that the Lord gives.

Then says Paul, pursue faith.

I think that stands over against those who were overthrown in their faith by the teaching of men like Hymenaeus and Philetus.

Their faith was overthrown by the wrong teachers.

But here is a man, this is a hypothetical man, this is a man who is a servant of the Lord, a vessel meant for the Master's use, and nobody's going to overthrow his faith. He's strong, he's pursuing it.

He's doing everything to promote it, to mature it, [00:36:01] that it might grow, that it might be strong. You remember the disciples said, Lord, increase our faith. And the Lord said, make that small amount of faith that you have work. Make it operative. And believe.

And I think there are many, many things in our lives whereby we can exercise faith so that it grows, it gets stronger. And the small things that we prove in faith helps us to lay hold of larger things in faith. We pursue it. It is stronger.

We don't let it be overthrown.

Brother mentioned this afternoon that because of conditions, these weak conditions that we face today, there is often doubts in our minds. Satan puts them there because of our weakness and low condition. And if we're not careful, those doubts can soon accumulate and occupy a place in our minds. [00:37:03] They rob us of energy, they rob us of desire, they rob us of the power for worship and the power for testimony. So they have to be pushed away.

And we pursue the things that strengthen our faith, that make the faith operative in our hearts. And we're not going to allow any teaching or influences to overthrow our faith. We lay hold on the one whom we follow. He's in glory, he's our Lord, he's our Master. He's the despot, as we were reminded this afternoon. And as we lay hold on him and get the resource that he gives, then our faith is strengthened.

I remember as a young Christian being very much concerned about the teaching of evolution. I'd heard so much about it and how it was affecting the minds of so many. And I said, well, I must learn something about this. [00:38:02] So I wrote a book. It was called A Handbook to Evolution.

I read it.

And because of my immaturity and ignorance, I was very much affected by it. It was so plausible.

It seemed so reasonable.

And it affected me in a very, very serious way. And I said, I must look into this a little further. So I went up to the museum. And I went to the place where they had these exhibits of prehistoric man and showing the descent of man from some form of animal down to his present condition today, modern man. There they were, all those different exhibits. And they were clay models. And in all those clay models, there were little pieces about the size of my thumb. There'd be a piece in the head, down at the thigh, and down at the foot. [00:39:03] So I read the piece on the outside of the case. And those little grey pieces were the pieces of bone that were found sometimes half a mile away from each other. And this was reconstructed.

This whole man was reconstructed on the basis of perhaps five or six small pieces of bone. The more I looked at it, the more ludicrous it appeared to me. And I said, I must look into this a little further. So instead of reading books that propagated this kind of thing, I searched for books by Christians who knew what they were talking about.

Qualified Christians, biologists, others, eminently qualified as scientists. And they showed a completely different thing altogether. You see, if I had allowed myself to be influenced by what one side presented, [00:40:03] my faith could have been overthrown. But I made inquiry as to the other side, to what some other persons presented, equally qualified as to those other people, perhaps better qualified. And they gave the Christian point of view, and of course it completely destroyed this evolutionary idea. Well, this is the kind of thing that we have to do.

If there are doubts in your mind, strengthen, pursue faith.

The things that solidify, if you like, what you believe to be the truth according to the Bible. Pursue it. Make inquiry.

Strengthen your faith by finding what is true from the word of God. Then we find the other thing that we have to pursue is charity or love.

[00:41:03] I think that this is over against this man called Philetus.

This man Philetus, his name means lovable.

Philio is a Greek word for love, which means something attractive in the person who loves, or something attractive in other persons who are loved. Now this man Philetus has this kind of character.

He's a lovable sort of man. He might be a lovable man, but he's a rascal as far as the Christian testimony is concerned. He's overthrowing the faith of some. And because he's a nice looking man, and he's an eloquent speaker, and he's kind, and he's considerate, and he's all that a gentleman should be, there's no guarantee that he's a man of God.

All the more dangerous. We find in the 16th chapter of Romans [00:42:03] that people who are causing divisions amongst the saints, they are very good at speaking. By good speaking, and by their ways, they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting. This is the kind of man Philetus was. An amiable, lovable sort of man.

And because he was, he carried away the hearts of many, and overthrew the faith. Now, says Paul to Timothy, you pursue love.

And that's a different word altogether. This is a strong love.

It has nothing to do with what's attractiveness. Not that there's anything wrong with the word phileo in other contexts. Don't mistake me.

But this word that's used to follow after love is agapeo, the word that's often used in connection with Christian teaching. And it's a strong love. [00:43:01] A love that can be relied upon. A love that is settled, not fluctuating. It's a love that's strong and reliable. Now he says to Timothy, says Paul to Timothy, pursue this kind of love.

My, when we read about the verses that tell us about love in the Scripture, we're to desire this earnestly about all other kinds of gifts.

Great desire today to have gifts, ecstatic powers, the ability to do things that are powerful and are signs.

Noah says, Paul, follow after the best.

I'll show you the best way, the most excellent way, love.

And that 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians, it's certainly worth pursuing. My, that's a good kind of love.

It's not the wishy-washy kind of thing that people speak of today as love, that can be largely described as lust. [00:44:01] Evil lust.

No, this is a love that's pure. A love that's holy.

A love that's reliable. And we have to pursue it.

We haven't to expect to be loved. If we pursue this love, it's our responsibility to love. The obligation rests upon you and upon me to love and to love and to keep on loving.

Also, of course, it involves equal obligations upon us all that if love is flowing in the Christian company, it's a powerful barrier against the inroads of evil. Pursue love.

That's a very, very great feature in anyone who is a servant of the Master.

A vessel made for the Master's use.

And lastly, in this presentation, Paul says to Timothy, [00:45:02] pursue peace.

Now if you take a good concordance, you'll find at least three occasions, this one makes four, where Paul says to different companies, different people, pursue peace.

My, what a pursuit there is for that today. The nation's terrified because of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and all kinds of things causing great concern in the hearts of men and women. And we can understand that. What a yearning there is for peace. There is industrial strife.

There is domestic strife. Strife amongst Christians. Strife everywhere.

What a need there is for peace. Well, if you pursue it, and I pursue it, and every Christian pursues it, there will be a great deal of peace in our lives and in the lives of others. And that's it. That will be extremely helpful. Now peace in the Bible [00:46:02] never, never, never means compromise. It never means that you agree to be quiet about any particular problem because it might cause trouble. I know.

You might find that you've got a cancer that will grow and grow and cause more disease. No. Righteousness at the basis will always produce a lasting peace.

I often refer to this when I speak about peace that we understand from the First World War after the Allies gained victory over the Germans and others.

It says, they lost the peace.

They won the war and they lost the peace. In the Versailles Treaty, they sold the seats for another war by not being properly discerning as to what was the proper arrangement after the war was won.

Well, so it is in the Christian testimony. [00:47:03] In our lives, if we want peace, we have to follow righteousness. It's inevitable.

Peace always follows righteousness. If we do what's right, the Lord will say in our hearts, Obey the peace. And oh, what a wonderful thing this is. Now I believe this peace stands over against strife. That's obvious.

Paul says, watch those people who are always striving about wars, always wondering about genealogies, making long, long eloquent orations about things that are of no value whatsoever. They only cause strife.

I am a servant of the Lord. The vessel of meat for the master's use is to pursue peace.

You remember Caleb and Joshua.

We spoke about them through the week. When the people got very upset because of the report of the ten spies, [00:48:02] it says, Caleb and Joshua, they quietened the people.

I think that's pursuing peace.

They spoke to them in such a way that their fears lessened, that the unhappiness that was amongst them, it went away.

The reassuring words, they were very, very good, and they helped the people. It comes to my mind, I think it's in connection with Mordecai, at the end of the book of Esther. It says, he spoke peace to all the people.

And why?

The people had been disturbed, had they not? There was a danger of them being exterminated.

Genocide was something that was being practiced by that evil man.

And then he ended his days in the gallows. And after that, Mordecai spoke peace to the people. [00:49:02] He gave them assurance. Everything's all right. Don't need to be afraid anymore. Matter's been dealt with. The danger's been removed. And he spoke peace to them.

Oh, above all, think of the Lord Jesus coming in amongst his own when he rose from the dead.

Three times over, he spoke peace to them. And there's a different application to each occasion when he says, peace be unto you.

And he did that, and he expects us to do that. Not to create dispeace, but to quiet the fears of people, to follow pursuit of peace amongst the people of God, to do all that we can to be peacemakers. Blessed are the peacemakers.

A very, very good concern for those of us to follow who want to be servant's meat for the master's use. Well, these are things that we have to pursue, [00:50:01] and it says, with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

We begin, first of all, in individual responsibility.

We mustn't look over our shoulders and say, he ought to be doing this, or she ought to be doing this.

The words that we've been reading all week, and the words tonight, they're intensely individual.

I have to be sure that I am doing what Paul is directing Timothy to do. That's my responsibility. And it's your responsibility.

Everyone's individual responsibility.

But what happens if we pursue these things?

We'll certainly find that there are others who are doing the same thing. That's not surprising. Who is it that's directing them? Why, the Lord of glory. The Holy Spirit indwelling each believer.

[00:51:03] This is where the direction comes from. It's the new life coming into expression. And as the truth is listened to, and as the truth is obeyed, then it's inevitable that others, others are governed by the same desires and the same principles, and so they walk together. They all agree. They're all wanting to be servants, meet for the Master's use. They're all following the right things, righteousness, faith, love, peace.

They're all doing the same thing. Well, we shouldn't be apart. We should all be together. And so find strength in fellowship, calling on the Lord out of a pure heart.

When I was younger, and I used to hear people talk about calling on the Lord with a pure heart, I looked at it, my poor heart, and I said, well, that's anything but pure. I said, well, this is something very, very difficult to attain to, to have a pure heart before you call upon the Lord. [00:52:03] I don't think that now. I think every believer has a pure heart.

I'll give you my scripture for proving it. If you turn to Acts chapter 15, and forget the particular verse, but Peter says, their hearts were purified by faith.

Now that's true of every believer. Every believer has a pure heart. Whether every believer exercises that heart in purity is another matter.

Peter says that we're to love fervently out of a pure heart.

Paul says in his first letter to Timothy that love is to be out of a pure heart and from a good conscience and from faith and fame. And I have the impression every Christian has a pure heart, but every Christian doesn't act purely. That affects me, and I'm going to say it affects you [00:53:02] because I'll credit you with acting all the time out of a pure heart. So we have to exercise ourselves as to whether we do call on the Lord out of a pure heart without any mixed motives, without any personal advantage, that we call upon Him because we love Him and our hearts are freed from everything that would hinder this great service that we are to render to the One who is our Master. Or that it might be so.

I'm sure you deny it.

You desire it.

Every true Christian desires it surely to call on the Lord without any mixed motives, with a desire to serve Him to the utmost of the capabilities that He gives us because He wants this from us.

Whether you're a new Christian or an older Christian, it matters little.

The Lord wants our lives for Himself. Or we might all benefit [00:54:02] from our consideration of these few verses in 2 Timothy 2.

Not to be occupied unduly with the great challenge that you present, although that's the object, but to be concerned with the greatness of the persons that we are to serve. The foundation of God.

The Lord.

The Master.

The greatness of themselves.

Who they are. What they have done. What they can do.

What a privilege in any way to be able to serve the Lord, to serve our God in these days in which we live.

May we be encouraged for His next coming.