

RIGHTLY DIVIDING[©]

Title: Unashamed Workman

II TIMOTHY 2:15

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”

CONTEXT:

In the Apostle Paul’s second epistle to Timothy, we witness an occasion of pastoral remarks. The purpose of his writing was to maintain the faith and to insure the continuity of the Church of Jesus Christ. Paul has given a solemn charge to Timothy – “That good thing which was committed unto thee **keep** by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us” [II. Timothy 1:14] – which is the heart of this pastoral epistle.

The epistle is written as a solemn charge in two parts bound together by a doctrinal truth – “for if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us; if we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he can not deny himself” (II Timothy 2:11-13). Paul begins with a salutation and thanksgiving and concludes with a personal note and prayer.

The chief point in Paul’s pastoral epistle is the presentation of the Gospel as a trust to be preserved, cherished, and committed to faithful men.

II Timothy 2:15

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Sermons for Pastors and Leaders of the Christian faith!

HISTORICAL FACTS

II Timothy is one of the two epistles written to Timothy regarding the church at Ephesus and Crete. Scholars believe the Apostle Paul wrote the letter from prison in Rome to advise his son in the faith and others. The time of writing is believed to be AD 61 or AD 63. However, there are scholars that doubt Paul’s authorship and reference an anonymous author – “the pastor” – that would be a student of the Pauline doctrine. It is suggested that this discourse does not fit the Pauline style of writing as it were with his other epistles and was likely written between 90 and 140. Scholars also believe that II. Timothy was the last letter written before Paul’s death.

INTRODUCTION:

II Timothy 2 is a continued conversation of encouragement for Timothy and a reminder to continue in the things learned of Paul. Paul instructs Timothy to commit the things he has learned to faithful men (Pastors) who will be able to teach others. Paul is referring to the words of Christ in Matthew 28:19-20 – “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” – suggesting that Timothy should fulfill the commandment of Christ by teaching and baptizing.

Paul begins to give Timothy advice on a trust requiring faithfulness. He suggests that Timothy should be diligently committed to others as a soldier (2:3-4), as a master teacher (2:5), and as a farmer in this harvest of the gospel (2:6). He reminds Timothy to be firmly guarded in the central truth of the gospel (2:8) by giving an example of his own faithfulness (2:9-10). Paul reminds Timothy of a doctrinal truth (2:11-13) and what it takes for the truth to be rightly handled (2:14-19). The central theme of this message is learning how to rightly handle the word of God.

MESSAGE:

II Timothy 2:15 has been written as a Pauline commandment that redirects the Pastor to the commandment of Christ (Matthew 28:19-20). How can you teach all nations as Christ suggest without studying what has been committed to you?

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, Rightly Dividing the word of truth.”

Paul suggests to Timothy that all Pastors should study. In the Greek, *study* [*spoudazō*] means to give diligence to, earnest care, and carefulness to

study. Paul has stated the importance of being diligent. However, we can also capture the importance of diligence by examining II Peter 1:10. Simon Peter writes, “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.” Peter is suggesting that the brethren should give diligence to the things of God. Peter claims that this diligence supports your calling and election (relationship with God) and if you continue in this diligence, you will not fall. Peter, like the Apostle Paul, wanted the called of God to remember these things that were committed unto them (II Peter 1:15).

Paul advises Timothy to keep pastors in remembrance of doctrinal truth (II Timothy 2:14). Paul made mention of this diligence in his first letter to Timothy – “If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, where unto thou hast attained” (I Timothy 4:6). Giving diligence to study is for the purpose of showing thyself approved unto God and it makes one a good minister of Jesus Christ.

“Study to show thyself approved unto God”

In searching for what is meant by “*approved*”, a cross-reference is given for *shew* and present in the Greek [*paristemi*] – meaning there has to be a showing or presenting in order to receive approval. God’s approval is [*dokimos*] in the Greek, which means acceptable and tried. Scholars also suggests that *dokimos* means to receive welcome, something that passes the necessary test (scrutiny), and hence acceptable because of genuine validation or verification. Paul commands that the pastor must give diligence to study because it helps with scrutiny and it brings validity to the relationship with God because of verification by Him.

Study speaks to a pastor’s acceptance from

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God. Scholars further suggest that *dokimos* was used for proving (testing) of coins (i.e. confirming they were genuine and not counterfeit, corrupted). Therefore, Paul is communicating that pastors give diligence in study so that approval come from God to separate the counterfeit and corrupted from the real workman (husbandman). In II Timothy 2:6, Paul states “the husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits.” If pastors are going to give out from among that which they labor, then pastors must first be a partaker. Pastor cannot give out (of the word) from what they have not experienced (in the word).

“a workman that needeth not to be ashamed”

Paul suggests that the workman (husbandman) should not be [*ashamed - epaischunomai*]. In the Greek, [*epaischunomai*] means not disgraced or disgraced like someone that has been singled out because they misplaced their confidence or support. *Epaischunomai* (dishonor) also refers to disgrace - bringing on a fitting shame that matches the error of wrongly identifying (aligning) with something. It is important to understand what has taken place to fully grasp Paul’s command to not be ashamed.

II Timothy 2:16-18 gives an account of pastors that have turned aside from doctrinal truth. It reads, “But shun profane and vain babblings; for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker (cancer); of whom is Hy-me-né-us and Phi-lé-tus; who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.” Paul is warning Timothy that pastors should not be ashamed (dishonored or disgraced) if they rightly divide doctrinal truth. He suggest that it is important to shun these profane and vain babblings (i.e. to shun useless theories that do not honor God).

“rightly Dividing the word of truth”

A workman should not fill (ashamed) disgraced, dishonored, or single-out because of failed confidence if they rightly divide the word.

What does it mean to rightly divide the word? Rightly dividing the word of truth is about pulling the carnality out of the word. The Greek work for right is [*dikaios*] meaning just, righteous, impartial. *Dikaios* also means especially just in the eyes of God and derived from [*dikē* “right and judicial approval”]. It describes the conformity to God’s own being, His will, standing of rightness, and upright. Therefore, if pastors are to be right in dividing the word of truth, then seeking righteousness in important. Righteous [*dikaiosynē*] relates to conformity to God’s standard (justice). Therefore, Paul is declaring to Timothy that pastors – teachers of the word – must take a posture of righteousness thus having conformity to God and His just ways.

Being impartial takes courage! Most often pastors can be found speaking cliché’s in their Sunday sermon. However, cliché’s are very different from providing thought provoking sermon illustrations. Sermon illustrations are examples, evidence, ideas or past occasions that relate to the sermon topic in an attempt to make the sermon relevant to the believer. In order to rightly divide the word of truth, pastors must first understand the word. When pastors do not understand the word, then cliché’s are created, error is made, and believers fall.

Rightly dividing the word in not adding things to the word of God. The *WORD* is truth within itself. Jesus declared in John 14:6 “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” Therefore, nothing is needed in addition to the word. Jesus and his commandments are the only requirement for the gospel message. We understand from II Timothy 2:16-18 that

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several pastors had turned from doctrinal truth suggesting that the resurrection is past already. They fail to walk in doctrinal truth and erred by teaching falsely before the people. Walking in righteousness and having just behavior before God will determine how you divide the word of truth.

In the Greek rightly dividing [*orthotomeō*] means cut straight, handle correctly, and teach rightly. Therefore, righteousness (i.e. a position of right standing and just behavior with God) will ensure proper handling of the word of truth. *Orthotomeō* is derived from [*ortho* “straight”] and properly means cut straight on a straight line that is correctly apportioned. Paul suggests that pastors in right standing and just behavior before God will handle the word correctly, give out right portions (milk or meat), and without being impartial. Rightly dividing the word is straight talk – adding nothing to the word of God and taking nothing from the word of God, – which is handled through proper study.

The Apostle Paul declared how pastors must understand rightly dividing the word of truth – STUDY. Rightly dividing is about the impartation to the believer and not setting an impartial standard. Paul wanted the pastors to pull away from carnality and things of this world thus accepting and cleaving to God’s way. It is imperative that pastors impart the word correctly.

MESSAGE NOTES:

1. Study to be legally accepted by God.
2. Take a course in how to study the word of God. It is a valuable lesson!
3. Do not be ashamed of God, Christ, or Holy Spirit. Deal with any shame you may have concerning the Holy Trinity.
4. Make sure you are in right standing with God. Follow after His laws and precepts. If you are not in right standing ask a mentor to take you

through proper steps of deliverance.

5. Ask yourself this question: what am I imparting: (1) truth or (2) cliché’s that lead to deception?

6. Why speak error when the truth is available? The truth is available through the word. Stop the unhelpful cliché’s.

PERSONAL MESSAGE NOTES:

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- 2.
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- 5.
- 6.

MESSAGE ILLUSTRATIONS:

- 1.
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Concluding Thoughts

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” is a very popular scripture for the body of Christ. However, it is imperative that pastors and leaders regardless of denomination began to rightly divide the word. Rightly dividing the word is about imparting truth to believers so that the believer may continue to spread the correct gospel message. The word states that Holy Spirit was given so that we may be witnesses in the earth. However, it is up to pastors to embrace Holy Spirit so they may show forth their trust in what Jesus promised them to help spread the gospel message.

Pastors, do a favor to yourself and the congregation by taking time to properly study the word. There is true reward on the opposite end of the spectrum – acceptance by God. Who does not want God’s true acceptance and to hear the words “well done”.



EVETTE

*Sermons for Pastors and Leaders
of the Christian faith!*

The scripture and above material has been taken from the King James Version of the Holy Bible and Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words. The opinions of this sermon are from Dr. Evette Hyder-Davis and should be researched further by the recipient. Rightly Dividing sermon series is a copyright of Dr. Evette Hyder-Davis with permission for use but not distribution.

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