

# 2 Timothy 3 - Part 1

by Robert F. Adcock

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*The sermon warns of the dangers of the last days and encourages believers to be courageous, humble, and loyal to Christ.*

**Duration:** 41:25

**Scripture:** Romans 1:24, Revelation 3:20

**Topics:** "Faithfulness", "Gods Sovereignty"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher reflects on the current state of the world and the challenges faced by believers. He acknowledges the distressing times we live in, characterized by hostility, hatred, and a lack of love. However, he reminds the audience that God is still in control, despite the chaos in the world. The preacher emphasizes the importance of being prepared for the difficult days ahead and encourages believers to remain faithful to the cause of Jesus Christ, knowing that he understands and empathizes with their struggles.

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## Transcript

One correction, next Sunday I will not be here. Charles Oxendine will be here next Sunday, and keep that in mind. Charles is down in Robeson County, and Brother Oxendine will be with us next Sunday for both services.

Reading from verse 1 in 2 Timothy chapter 3, This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, petty, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power of it from such turn away. For this sort are they who creep into houses and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with various lusts, ever learning and ever able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Now as Janes and James withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth. Men of corrupt minds reprobate concerning the faith, but they shall proceed no further, for their folly shall be manifest unto all men as theirs also was. And God will add His blessing to the reading of this, His holy word.

The Apostle Paul, in writing to his son in the faith, Timothy, has something to say to him regarding a warning. It is a warning. The list of things that we've read that he gives that characterize the last days are

rather frightening, but it's the truth.

And Paul, from a prison cell, anticipating that perhaps very shortly, and it wasn't long after he penned this last of his epistles, his letters, that he was executed for his faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. So with that in mind, he writes Timothy a letter. He wants to stimulate this young man to a sense of renewal of his faith.

He wants him to be courageous. He wants him to stand up and be counted in a world that has opposed him, a world that not only rejected and hated and crucified the Lord of glory, but indeed has taken an attitude of hostility toward all those that name the name of Christ. So he knows that Timothy is in for some testing along the way, and he issues to him these words of warning.

He wants him to be encouraged. It is a warning of what he is to expect. I think the reason he does this is probably because of something that he shares with us from chapter 1, when he says, You know well that all those in Asia deserted me.

It doesn't mean that everyone in Asia deserted him, but those that had identified themselves with him from that area of the world, because of his imprisonment, because of all of the unpleasant things that had happened, they decided that perhaps it wouldn't be too popular to identify with the Apostle Paul any longer. After all, who wants to be identified with a jailbird? And so he decides in his own heart and mind, You know, I better warn Timothy that not everybody will be loyal, not everybody will stick by you through thick and thin. Paul had learned to accept this.

You know, during the course of your Christian life, a lot of times you have to walk alone. A lot of times it is pretty lonely. Not even those nearest and dearest to you seem to understand sometimes your experience and what you are going through.

You can be assured of this, though. There is one that understands. It is our Lord Jesus Christ.

He is acquainted with all of the circumstances of life that touch us, and he is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He knows our frame, he knows what we are made out of, and he knows that there will be resistance and hostility in the world toward those that will be faithful to the cause of Jesus Christ. So Paul seeks to warn and prepare Timothy for the days that are ahead.

And when he gets to this part in which we find in the third chapter, it is a warning of what to expect. He did not want him to be caught off guard. He might have forgotten.

Maybe he had not felt some of the things that this old warrior had felt along the way. Maybe it had been just a little easier for Timothy. After all, he had just followed along, trailed along behind Paul in all of these new areas in which he had gone in.

And he had met that opposition head-on, and he had taken the gospel. He said in the letter that he writes to the Thessalonians and those that oppose the gospel, he said, We'd better do something about this. These men, they'll turn the world upside down if we don't stop them.

Well, you know, Timothy wasn't always with Paul in his missionary journeys, and he had a lot to learn. And it's true of us along the fast wave of life that we still have a lot to learn. We need to be warned.

The attitude of the world has never changed toward the person of Jesus Christ. That attitude is one of rejection. They said, Crucify him then, and they're saying, Crucify him now.

We will not have this man to rule over us. That's the attitude of the natural man in his heart. He opposes the gospel.

He opposes the person of Christ. It hasn't changed. And later on in this same chapter, those that will live godly in Christ Jesus, they will suffer persecution in this world.

And if we're not feeling the sting of persecution, if we're not feeling the rebuke of the world, more than likely we've compromised. If you haven't felt persecution in your life as a Christian, you've probably watered down. You're a witness.

You've compromised somewhere along the way. It's a true sign of our loyalty to the person of Jesus Christ when others oppose us in our stand for him. These things that the Word of God says, they're not put there just to entertain us.

They're not put there just to excite us. They're put there with a view that we would understand that there are certain conditions that if we experience in our own souls a loyalty and a fervency for the cause of Jesus Christ, the world will not like us. The world will resent this.

And you know, when we read this list of things that we're about to consider, these men that we're talking about, these men that Paul is warning Timothy about, they were in the church. They weren't roaming around out over the countryside. They had infiltrated the professing church of that day.

And these things that are so descriptive of them, the last days, that is, preceding the coming again of Jesus Christ. To prove that there is perfect agreement between Paul and Peter, 2 Peter 3 says this. This is what Peter has to say.

There shall come in the last days, and we're talking about that time between the first and the second advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, scoffers will appear. You say, well, what do you mean? They appear on the outer perimeter of the church. They're out in the world.

No, they're in the church. They're in the professing church. They're scoffers in the church today.

There are those that are opposed to the truths concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, deniers of the deity of the person of Christ, deniers of the value of the sacrificial atoning work that he did upon Calvary's cross, deniers of the value of the precious shed blood of Jesus Christ for that atonement that needs to be made for sin. Within the church there are scoffers. There are those that oppose the gospel.

They will appear during the last days. Those days started while Paul was here upon the earth. That's first century Christianity.

They have been extended, those days, up until this very present day. They will be with us until the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ. These conditions as they exist in the world.

Paul and Peter, they agree. Days full of danger. It says they will be perilous times.

They are distressing times. What would you have to say about today as far as how you view the world and the events in the world, things as they're happening in the world today? You think far afield and you think of all the turmoil that's in the world. You think of all the problems that we're faced with as men and women that living in a world in which there seems to be so much hostility, so much hatred, so much bitterness, such a lack of tenderness and love doesn't seem to exist anymore.

And we're living in this kind of world. What is your assessment of this? Well, Paul says there will be difficult days. In other words, do you get the idea sometimes that people in exasperation say, what is to be done? What can we do? What can we do? It just doesn't seem that we have a handle on things anymore.

Things are out of control. And the best leaders that we have in the nations in the world today, they're not able to keep things in a proper balance. And it concerns me.

And I feel fearful at times that things are out of control. And I feel fearful that things are out of control. Well, in the spiritual realm, you know, for a long time God's people have been assured over and over and over again that God is still in control.

Regardless of what you see in the world, regardless of any fearful spirit that you have in your soul, that indeed something's going to happen and God won't know about it and God won't be in control. Don't ever believe that. It is Paul writing to his same son in the faith, Timothy.

He says, God has not given to us the spirit of fear. And fear doesn't come from God. That fearfulness about what will happen tomorrow, we are encouraged in the word of God not to even take thought of what's coming tomorrow.

The evil of that day will take care of itself. We don't know what's coming on tomorrow, because tomorrow never comes. It's always today.

We should purpose in our hearts that today we will live our lives for the glory of God. How to handle the problems of today is something that we have constant acquaintance with because we have exposure to it every day we live. Newspapers, magazines, radio, television, the media is constantly bombarding us with all that is going on in the world.

And it is distressing. You may not know it, I may not know it, but a steady diet of that has its impact upon you. And you become a little jittery.

And you say, I don't know what's going on. This situation in the world today is out of control. Will you let your assurance in your faith rest in the one that indeed has never released its control over all of the affairs of men? He puts men up, he raises them up, he puts them down.

Sovereignly God is in control. And let the believer in the depths of his soul be fully persuaded that his Christian faith and the God and the Savior that he has trusted will never for a moment release its hold upon him, but will safely see him through the course of this life. Paul says, I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

There might be many that say, these things that we read, they are so characteristic of people in the world. Certainly these people wouldn't even be tolerated in the church today. Well when I think of someone that is a professing Christian, he's in the church and he's a lover of self.

Do you think there are self-lovers in the church today? Well, of course they are. There are people that are in love with themselves, the narcissism spirit. They gaze with wonder at themselves in the mirror.

They see themselves as indeed a lot of things that they are not. But you know, this spirit which is so unlike the person of Christ, he humbled himself. His was an act of obedience.

He came to serve. He come to play the role of a servant. He had no regard for himself.

And yet so much self-centeredness in the church today. Men and women that have little regard for other members of the body of Jesus Christ, only thinking of self and self-serving. That exists in the church, the professing church.

Even within the body of Christ, there are those that possess this spirit, lovers of self. Utterly self-centered. What do I stand to gain from anything that touches my life? What do I stand to gain? No profit to me, I'm not interested.

But it would benefit someone else. Does it benefit me and my what a small world that individual lives in? Be he a professing Christian or be he one that knows the person of Jesus Christ is the spirit of Satan. That self-centeredness.

I will, I will, I will over all that God has directed in his wonderful holy word. Greedy of money. Greedy of money.

The love of money is the root of evil. The love of money. Not money, the love of it.

And you know and I know that there are people in the world today that will do anything for money. Anything for money. Personal gain.

You say there's no one like that in the church. I know there are not. Or there couldn't be.

Oh yes there are. Oh yes there are. There are people within the professing church and there are people in the real body of Christ.

They have their price. They have their price. For money! They'll do anything.

They'll do anything. Isn't it strange that when we think about this, the Lord Jesus said if a man gained everything that there was in the world and lost his soul, what value would it be? What value would it be? Well we're just passing through this scene. This world is not our home.

We're bound for our eternal home in heaven. You don't carry pocketbooks around in heaven and you don't count out the ones and the fives and the tens. God picked up the tab a long time ago.

It's all paid for. Our Lord Jesus Christ, he says, I'm going away to prepare a place for you. And when he signed his name in his own precious blood, that's a prepared place for a prepared people.

And all of the values of this life that seem so important to men, they have no value or importance in heaven. And yet this greediness for money that exists in the world today, that exists in the church, it's so sickening. It's so sickening to even think about it.

Full of big words, just boasting, boasting, boasting. Our Lord Jesus Christ never uttered a word, never uttered one word, not one vain word, not one word of proud boasting. And we are encouraged to follow that example.

Boasters, enlarging upon things, expanding things, always seeking to gain a personal advantage from it. Boasters, and there are those in the church that boast, like to focus attention upon themselves by something they claim for themselves that they don't deserve very often. You know, this saddens us.

This saddens us. And Paul is reviewing these things for his son in the faith, Timothy, and say, listen son, when you see this, don't jump back and say, oh, I didn't know it was there. I'm telling you it's there.

It's there. And too often Christians are criticized and say they're like ostriches. They go hide their head in the sand and they won't face the reality of what is happening in Christian circles.

Listen, everything that is happening in the world today is happening in Christian circles. Everything that's happening in the world. The church has become so infiltrated by the world itself.

There's not anything that you can name that's going on in the world today that's not going on in the professing church. And so many of the things that we're even talking about this morning take place in the real, the true church, the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. What a shame, what a tragedy.

One of the most tragic pictures that you see in the scriptures, of course, is that picture that we find in the third chapter of the book of Revelation, when our Lord Jesus Christ, the church at Laodicea, he's seen outside the door knocking and asking to be readmitted, that he might fellowship with his own, his own blood-bought children. Everything that I've mentioned to this point is contrary to the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. And everything that is mentioned in this passage, and over in Romans chapter 1, I read that as a parallel passage with this, just this morning.

It sounds so akin to each other. Paul's resume with all of the unrighteous things that were being practiced in the world at that time, and those words of warning, those words that just should shock. God gave them up, God gave them up, God gave them up.

You know, God draws a line, and God doesn't bluff. God plays for keeps. There's a line, there's a line.

You may cross that line. And when that obstinate, rebellious, adamant spirit that possessed those people in that day, possessed these people that Paul is talking about, God gave them up. Proud, blasphemous.

Instead of shame, which would be so obvious, shame over the things that they were doing, actually all of this wickedness just seemed to elate and give that sort of bravado. God, where is God? What is He going to do? I'm in charge around here. We do what we want to do.

We're religious. Why, we even named the name of Jesus Christ. He's one of us.

Proud boasters. They don't even realize the shame that they should feel over this sort of attitude toward the things of God. Can even strut about and speak evil things that relate to our faith and godliness.

Naming the name of Christ, and in the same breath, they embrace the things of this world. All of the godless things of this world that are today in the church, that are being practiced. Paul wanted Timothy to be aware of this.

He may have escaped, you know. He may have led a sheltered life. I trust we're not living sheltered lives to the extent that we think that these things don't exist.

They do exist. And you're hiding yourself. You're fooling yourself if you say these things don't exist.

I'll remind you of this. Just let me remind you of this. The thing most precious and dear to God upon the face of the earth is the church.

And when I say the church, I mean that body comprised of believers in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. That is the most precious thing in the sight of God here upon the face of this earth. But the church is not perfect.

There are many imperfections in the church. We are sanctified positionally. We are set apart for God and His glory.

Positionally we are seen as seated in heavenly places in Christ. And in that sense we are perfect. God sees us perfect in Christ.

That's our positional standing before God. But you know, in reality, what we are in this world today, with all of these influences that are directed toward each individual member in the body of Christ, it takes its toll. And we're not perfect.

We possess that Adamic nature, a nature that gives us the capability to do anything we've ever done before in our lives, no matter how repulsive, no matter how ungodly it may have been, we can still do those things because we possess that nature. And if we fail to walk in the Spirit, we will fulfill the lust of the flesh. This is the warning that's issued in the word of God.

Men that can strut about and speak evil of things that relate to our faith. And sometimes you hear things and you cringe. You say, he shouldn't say that.

That's something that I count precious and dear. He shouldn't say those things about the person of Christ. And we feel a little sense of shame and embarrassment for that person.

Sometimes a person that may be very prominent. Someone that is held in high regard by many people. And he openly and without shame says things that we know dishonor the person of Jesus Christ, the Spirit of the last days in which we live.

This passage, the part of it that talks about disobedience to parents. I've talked to a lot of parents that are constantly accusing their children of not showing them the loyalty and devotion that they should show. Constantly reminding them, honor thy father and thy mother that their days upon the earth may be long.

A long fruitful life is promised to those that honor and respect their parents. I'd like to say on behalf of the young people, I know many, many young people that today they honor their parents. They seek to walk in a way that it really brings honor.

And there is a sense of pride. I know some parents that have children that they're just a joy to their soul. If you have children and they're seeking to live for God, you thank God for it.

You thank God for it this morning. Too many have children that this world has won them away from us. Their hearts are wed to the world in which we live.

They love the things of the world. And you know the word of God says to love the world is to be the enemy of God. And many of these people, ignorantly, they love the world.

They've departed from those things that parents taught them. Their manner and attitude, of course, reflects, I think, the very character of these days, these perilous times. Children that seem to have lost all of their respect, all of their tenderness, all of their care for someone that on the face of this earth loves them more than anybody else.

I know a man that very sadly told me just a few months ago, talking about his own son. And this boy is indeed a bright, has a bright, promising future, a career. He said, You know, I spent \$40,000 for somebody else to brainwash him and teach him something that was completely contrary to everything I taught him.

I paid him \$40,000 to do that. Today his faith has been made shipwrecked. He no longer believes in the God that I introduced him to as a child at my knee.

He has cast aside everything, and he's gone the way of the world. I could only say this because I felt for him. His heart was broken.

One thing for sure, that young man is going to pay a high price for that attitude. He's been swept up in the spirit of the world in which we live. These are perilous times.

That young man is a victim of the God of this world who blinds the minds of those that will not believe. That lack of gratitude, unholy, no purity, no show of love. Our Christian faith tells us love is a part of what we are in Jesus Christ.

I'm talking about the real thing, that pure thing, that love of God that should be in our souls. If we ever lose it, what do we have left? We lose that capability to love the way the Lord Jesus Christ loved. Listen, we've lost something that is priceless.

But if it's going to be meaningful in your life, you've got to exercise that love every day. And well, you know how you prove your love for God? Just by loving your fellow believer. That's the way you do it.

Oh, I love God. But you hate your brethren. You don't like your brethren.

You don't like your fellow Christians. Well, God says that's inconsistent. You can't do that.

I won't even let you say, and it be the truth, you love me and you don't love your brethren. I won't have that. I reject that.

Love. My. It should be something that everyone that sees us and knows that we name the name of Christ, they love each other.

They care for each other. In our Christian faith, the one thing that should be written over it in blazing letters, love, love, love, they love each other. And that's what the Lord Jesus wants to see in every member of the body.

Well, you know, when he finally gets to the bottom line about this, as far as what he sees in the world, that fifth verse tells us something. It says these people, they can have a form or a shape. It may be a ritual.

And it, oh, it seems so nice, but it's only a facade of religion. But their conduct and what they do and what he has already enumerated, it denies that there's any reality. Christ is not in that.

This is not something that was produced by the Spirit of God. This is all of self. This is all of the spirit of the world in which we live.

This is all of the God of this world. It's not of Christ. And Paul says, I'll give you one word.

Steer clear of them. Stay away from them. Don't even have social contact with them if you can help it.

Let your life be a rebuke as to the way that they are living. Stay clear of people that indeed are characterized by this thing. What else do they do? He says, with stealth they creep in.

I can just picture the day in which he lived. These people that went around undermining the things that Paul had taught. It says women, but it could mean men, too.

People that were vulnerable, people that were living in sin, people that were living fast, free, footloose, and all that sort of thing. Eat, drink, and be merry. After all, we're supposed to have a good time in this life.

No thought of looking upon the world as something that had crucified and rejected their Savior, but embracing the world. These men going in and saying, oh, your way of life, you chose that lifestyle. It's all right.

You know, we can live with that. And embracing those people. It says silly women.

I don't even like to read that. You know, it seems to be a demeaning statement toward all women, but it's not meant that way, ladies. You Christian women that know the Lord.

Silly people with sins, led away with various lusts. These fellows would accommodate them and say, hey, come join us. You know, anything goes with us.

You know, we're liberated Christians. We do whatever we want to do. Oh, the grace of God, we can do whatever we want to.

We're still saved. We're on our way to heaven. That's foolishness.

And Paul could say, you know, Janies and Janegrees, they withstood Moses. Those same fellows, they're in the world today, and they are withstanding those that would be faithful to the true cause of Christ. But you be reminded of this.

They resist the truth. They are men of corrupt minds. They're so defiled.

They're so controlled by Satan. They are reprobate concerning the faith. But they can only go so far.

Again, God draws the line. God draws the line. I see those that so brazenly and so adamantly today resist everything that bespeaks of that which is holy and right and just.

One day they're going to meet God. We might not be able to handle them in this life, and we may not be able to resist them in the way that God resists them. One thing for sure, when they meet God, you be sure of this.

It is reckoned in all that God has written, is appointed unto men once to die, and after that judgment. One day every man that ever put his feet upon the face of this earth will stand at that place before God. These that are so characterized by these things, these that are deniers of the faith, they'll stand at the great white throne judgment.

I think of those men that are mentioned there in Matthew 7. We did many wonderful things in the name of Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus said, I never knew you. I never knew you.

I don't know how you used my name, but I never knew you. Those that name the name of Christ and still have all of their ambitions centered in this world, and this world, of course, is so precious and dear to the

heart of those that do not understand that there should be a heart separated and devoted to God. This man said, that wrote this letter, for me to live as Christ.

I ask you this morning, believer in our Lord Jesus, what are you living for? Are you living for the Lord Jesus? Is your life centered in Him? Are any of the things that we've touched upon this morning, have you detected that any of these things are a part of your life? Will God give us the grace, God give us the strength, God give us the wisdom to bow the knee in His presence and confess the sin that we've committed? Our Lord taught His disciples, and He says, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Deliver us from the power of the evil one that would destroy Christian testimony, would render us impotent as far as our witness to the world in which we're living. You know, all that responsibility is upon me and upon you.

God holds each one of us accountable for our actions, what we do, what we say, how we live, what we do with our lives, because one day we shall stand at the judgment seat of Christ, and we will give an account of what we've done with our lives. If you're here without Jesus Christ, just one thing you have to do. Say, Lord, I'm a poor sinner.

I've been foolish. I've been living for myself. This morning I want to forsake all that.

I'm going to make an about-face, and I want to receive Christ as my Savior. You can do that this morning. We stand ready to help you.

We're going to have a word of prayer, and then Les is going to come and lead us in a hymn. If you desire help, we stand ready to help you, in Christ's name. Shall we pray? Our Father in Heaven, we do bow in Thy presence, and we thank Thee for Your Word, and we thank Thee for these things that are so clearly set before us.

Help us, we pray Thee, as believers in the Lord Jesus, to live our lives truly yielded to Your control and way for us, that we might indeed, as those that represent Jesus Christ in this world today, that we might portray Him and we might convey to this world this wonderful, divine person in all of His grace and love. For this we ask, giving thanks in His precious name. Amen.

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