

Sermon Notes

WORSHIP SERVICE - 5.21.2023

PART 13 - TRAINING FOR GODLINESS

I. INTRODUCTION

1 Timothy 4:6-10

6 If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed. 7 Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; 8 for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. 9 The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. 10 For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.

II. THE VALUE OF SPIRITUAL FITNESS

A GOOD SERVANT OF CHRIST JESUS

- Paul exhorts Timothy to *"put these things before the brothers..."*
- What things? The Holy and authoritative Word of God. Scripture, sound doctrine, apostolic teaching.
- It is to be put before the brothers - the church which is the family of God.
- He will be a good servant, a good minister of Christ Jesus, if he puts these things before the brothers.
- A good servant is one who is faithful in setting before the brothers the words of the faith.

- And notice, Timothy is to be trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine he has followed 6b.
- The same things he must set before the brothers are the very same things that he needs.
- Training is repeated three times in this passage. 6,7,8
- The word for training here means "to be nourished, to be raised up in."
- The nourishment Timothy requires is God's Word, the words of the faith, good doctrine.
- If Timothy does not continue being nourished by God's Word, he will not be a good servant of Christ Jesus.
- Timothy will only be effective as a minister if he is daily sustaining himself by the words of the faith.

- Every Christian needs to be nourished in the same way.
- 2 Peter 2:2 Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation.
- Do you desire the nourishment of God's Word like a baby craves milk?
- It's the only way you will grow in your faith and into the salvation Christ has purchased for you.
- You cannot divorce growing in godliness from your need of nourishment from God's Word.

- If you are feeling weak and anemic in your spiritual life, you need to evaluate what you are feeding on.

TRAIN YOURSELF FOR GODLINESS

- Paul commands Timothy again to avoid irreverent, silly myths.
- Irreverent means profane, godless; silly myths are literally the silly tales of old women, or the vain superstitions that old women tell.
- These things stand in direct contrast to the sound doctrine, the words of the faith.
- These things must be avoided because they do not provide the nourishment God's people need, that Timothy himself needs.
- In contrast to the life-giving, soul-satisfying, sustaining nourishment of the words of faith, irreverent, silly myths are like cotton candy.
- 2 Timothy 4:3-4 For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, 4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

THE GOAL OF TRAINING

- Instead of listening to silly myths, Timothy is to train himself for godliness.
 - This is the second definition for training.
 - This word used is the word for physical training that athletes perform, physical discipline.
 - Train, Greek "gymnazō" (γυμνάζω) - train, undergo discipline; from where we derive our English word "gym" or "gymnasium."
 - The word literally means to "train naked."
 - Paul is using the metaphor of athletic training because it would have resonated greatly with the believers in Ephesus.
 - The Greek world loved their athletic contests. Athletes would train at the gymnasium, which was a usually large outdoor space.
 - The athletes would train and compete while naked.
 - Why? So that their movements would not be hindered by their clothing.
 - Today, athletes exercise and compete in the lightest and least clothes possible so they won't be hindered.
 - Strip away from yourself everything that hinders you and is unnecessary and discipline yourself for godliness.
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- We know that if we want to exercise properly it requires discipline.
 - But the kind of training here that Paul has in mind isn't for a certain physical outcome.
 - That doesn't mean that bodily training and discipline isn't important.
 - He says it is, "bodily training is of some value."
 - When we exercise we grow stronger, have greater agility, flexibility, stamina and endurance, we will be physically healthier. There are many health benefits.
 - Paul writes that he disciplines his body and keeps it under control (1 Cor. 9:27).
 - But, this will only have value to me in the present life.
 - There is only one thing that has value and benefits that lasts into eternity and that is the goal of the training that Paul has in mind—godliness.
 - Godliness holds promise for the present life and for the life to come.

WHAT IS GODLINESS

- Godliness is a major theme in the Pastoral Letters. Occurs thirteen times in the pastorals.
 - Clearly it was something at the forefront of Paul's mind in his writing.
 - A basic definition of godliness is respect or reverence, piety.
 - The Greek word, "eusebeia" (εὐσεβεία) was used of reverence for rulers, magistrates, or parents.
 - In the case of Paul's writing, godliness then is reverence for God.
 - Godliness is the reverential fear of the Lord mingled with love for God.
 - Godliness is the reverential worship and awe of God that flows into a life of obedience.
 - John Calvin wrote that godliness was, "*the beginning, middle, and end of Christian living.*"
 - George W. Knight III, in his commentary on the Pastoral Epistles, wrote, "Godliness is *active—kinetic obedience that springs from a reverent awe of God.*"
 - Kent Hughes writes, "*God-struck doers of the Word are the only ones that can rightly be termed godly.*"
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- Godliness spills over into the conduct of those who have been captivated by Christ and transformed by the gospel.
 - What we're talking about is our sanctification—our growth in godliness.
 - Paul says we are to train ourselves to reverence God so that it affects our conduct, actions, attitudes, and behavior.
 - Godliness has value that holds promise in the present life and the life to come.
 - The godly person is spiritually fit in every way.
 - Godliness has benefits for us in this life and makes us fit for the life to come.
 - Unlike bodily training, which only has temporary benefits, godliness has value in every way!
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- How does it have value?
 - Godliness sanctifies us in this life.
 - Godliness helps us to enjoy God in this life.
 - In the life to come, godliness prepares us for glory, we will get everything God has promised to us in Christ!
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- Paul writes this "saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance."
 - We've seen this before. It is an exclamation point on the statement he just wrote about the lasting benefits and promises of godliness.
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- How about you?
 - Is your focus only on the temporary or do you have eternity in mind as well?
 - Train yourself for godliness, it benefits you now and holds promise for eternity.

III. HOW TO TRAIN FOR GODLINESS

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- How do we train for godliness?
 - Paul doesn't go into specific detail here.
 - The context of the passage fills that in for us.
 - We train ourselves for godliness the same way we nourish ourselves—in the Word of God.
 - Nothing stirs up the affections and love for God that produces reverence for him, like the Word of God.
 - You cannot become godly without God's Word.
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- Being trained in God's Word, will keep us from getting the spiritual disciplines wrong.
 - Hebrews 5:11-14 About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. 12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, 13 for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. 14 But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

THE FUEL OF GODLY LIVING

- What is the fuel for godliness, it's not legalism, it's not asceticism.
- Grace and God's Word are the fuel for godliness!
- Many approach the spiritual disciplines in a legalistic fashion.
- The discipline and training Paul talks about here is not legalism.
- It is joyful obedience to God. It's training through the intake of Scripture, study, prayer, fasting, listening to gospel preaching, serving, giving, and everything we are commanded to in this Christian life.

YOU WON'T BE DISAPPOINTED

- Paul closes this thought by elevating the hope that comes from the pursuit of godliness in the Christian life.
 - 10 For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.
 - Paul is not teaching that all men will be saved. Scripture is clear, only those who believe are saved.
 - In a general sense, He is the Savior of all people as there is no salvation apart from Him.
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- Paul says that they are working hard, they are laboring strenuously, they are training themselves for godliness, because their hope is set on the living God, the Savior of all men.
 - Godliness is work. It's hard work. It's effort.
 - Here is the key: it is a joyful, grace-filled effort.
 - The beauty of what God has promised to us in his Word is that we don't do this in our strength, and we don't have to wonder if it will pay off in the end.
 - Spiritual training won't leave you disappointed.

HOW WILL WE SUCCEED

- What does he ground the success of all of the toiling and striving in our training for godliness?
 - The Living God, the Savior of all those who have believed in Christ.
 - Earlier Paul called Christ, the mystery of godliness (1 Tim. 3:16).
 - He is the one who makes godliness possible.
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- And because Christ is the one who saved us and has gone before us we can have confidence that our training will produce the intended result.
 - **Hebrews 12:1-3** Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.
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- He is the founder and perfecter of our faith. He started it and finished it, and he who began the good work in you is faithful to bring it to completion on the day of Christ (Phil. 1:6).
 - Because he endured, we can endure.
 - Because he is seated at the right hand of the throne of God, ruling with all authority and power, there is no doubt as to our success in this life and the one to come.
 - He will succeed in bringing us all to glory in our pursuit of godliness

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?