

“But You”

2 Timothy 3:10-4:5

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Introduction:

In Paul’s second letter to his young disciple, Timothy, we see him use this phrase “but you” three separate times. We also see him say this to Timothy once in his first letter to him:

1 Timothy 6:9-11 ⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of* evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. ¹¹ But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.

While there is much to be learned from these verses, I believe God is calling us tonight to consider Paul’s three “but you” statements to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:10-4:5, as they pertain to those who are in the last days and what their conduct and character should be like.

Now before we really get into unpacking the first “but you” statement in chapter 3 verse 10, I want you all to take note of how each time Paul says these two words, it is to make a distinction out of Timothy.

This idea of Timothy being a distinction is the concept of being *DIFFERENT*, *SEPARATE*, or the lofty Bible word that intimidates some, *HOLY/SANCTIFIED*.

When we came to Christ and surrendered our lives to Him, we were separated from the world by His blood. He separated each of us to be a part of His own special people (His bride).

1 Peter 2:9-10 ⁹ But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.”

2 Corinthians 6:17-18 ¹⁷ Therefore, “Come out from among them And *be separate*, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.” ¹⁸ “I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty.”

When we were separated by the blood of Christ, we were not only *positionally* sanctified, but we were also *practically* sanctified.

This has some major implications for us as those who belong to Christ:

We are to have a *distinct* character and conduct that is no longer according to the sinful world but is according to our holy God.

- This is what godliness is- acting in accordance to the nature of God (God-likeness)
 - Because God is patient, so we are to be patient; because God is kind, so we are to be kind

What we'll see in these three "but you statements" is Paul describing the aimless and sinful character/conduct of the godless world in the last days and how Timothy should be/live in response.

1. But You HAVE (vs 10-12)

"¹⁰ But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, ¹¹ persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. ¹² Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution."

Now, as it will be with all of the 'but you' statements that we unpack, in order to appreciate the depth of what Paul is telling Timothy, we must look at the verses just before.

What Paul tells Timothy just before this is all about the perilous times of the last days that will stem from the godless characteristics of men.

2 Timothy 3:2-7 ²For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³ unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, ⁴ traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! ⁶ For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, ⁷ always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."

In light of Paul telling Timothy of how these last-days men will be, he encourages/commends him for how he had "carefully followed" Paul's example.

We read in Acts 16 of how Paul originally scooped young Timothy up as his disciple in Lystra. Timothy then went on to follow Paul as he went on preaching the Gospel and establishing the churches throughout the land.

As Timothy followed Paul, he made it his aim to emulate Paul's Christlike example:

"carefully followed" – to follow faithfully, to conform oneself to

Timothy had no doubt in his mind that Paul had an example that was worth imitating. We see in verse 10 of the several specific ways that Timothy carefully followed Paul:

“doctrine” – Paul’s teaching and instruction in the Word

- Timothy knew that Paul was a man of the Word and that his teaching of it was Biblically sound

“manner of life” – Paul’s conduct and lifestyle

- Timothy saw how Paul was not only an excellent instructor of the Word of God, but he was also a man who lived it out. His manner of life was one worth imitating

“purpose” – God’s purpose for Paul was that he’d be a chosen vessel who’d take the Gospel to the Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel

- Timothy desired to follow in this purpose. He too desired to be a minister of the Gospel of Christ

“faith” – Paul’s trust and confidence in God and His promises (even in the grimmest of circumstances)

- We’ll get into it in a moment but, Timothy saw Paul endure some very challenging times. But not only did he watch Paul go through these tough times, he watched how Paul kept faith in God through them all.

“longsuffering” – Paul’s patience that he had with people

- As God is longsuffering/patient with humanity so that they may be saved, so did Timothy watch Paul be the same way towards even those who rejected him.

“love” – Paul’s steadfast love for the Lord and for the lost

- Timothy got to be a firsthand witness of how deeply Paul loved the Lord, the Church, and the lost and how this love compelled him to press on

“perseverance” – Paul’s steadfastness, constancy, and endurance

- Perseverance- “a characteristic of a man who is not swayed from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest of trials and suffering”
- Timothy truly saw how nothing could move Paul from what God had called him to do

But Timothy was also a witness to all the persecutions that happened to Paul for the sake of the Gospel.

“persecution” – harassment/punishment designed to injure, grieve, or cause suffering

In Acts 13 and 14 we read of just some of the many persecutions Paul endured for the sake of the Gospel. In Antioch, the Word was being spread, but the Jews conspired against Paul and Barnabas

and had them kicked out of the city. At Iconium, Paul was preaching and performing signs but became aware of an effort being put together to stone both him and the other apostles which forced them to flee. At Lystra, Paul healed a crippled man and called people to repent and turn to the living God but the same Jews from Antioch and Iconium found him and actually succeeded in stoning him!

What I love about how Paul describes Timothy's careful following of him is how Timothy didn't simply follow Paul when things were easy, he also did so when things were TOUGH. Timothy had counted the cost of not only following Paul, but of following Jesus Christ and determined it was so worth any persecution he may endure for it.

“And out of them all the Lord delivered me.”

In reflecting on these things to Timothy, Paul reminds him of how faithful God was to deliver him out of ALL of these persecutions!

Psalm 34:17 *“¹⁷ The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears, And delivers them out of all their troubles.”*

And now, verse 12: one of the forgotten promises of the Bible...

“¹² Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”

None of us wake up in the morning and say to ourselves, “boy I sure hope I get persecuted today”. You'd be a weirdo if you did! But the thing we must recognize about persecution is that it will surely come to those who truly live godly in Christ Jesus!

Thankfully, we dwell in a nation that has laws devoted toward protecting religious liberty but, as we're already beginning to see, it will not always be this way in America. We're beginning to see people lose their jobs for standing against ungodliness. We've seen churches being attacked by the very government that is supposed to protect them simply for meeting together. We're seeing the truth of God's Word being treated as hate speech. These things are only the tip of the iceberg.

Other nations, where persecution against Christians runs rampant, understand the significance of verse 12 much more than the American Christian.

I genuinely wonder how many who claim the name of Christ in America would continue to do so if real persecution came knocking on their doorstep. In the parable of the Sower, Jesus described a type of soil that immediately receives the Word with joy, but when trouble and persecution arise because of the word, he stumbles/falls away because he has no deep roots. May it not be so of us!

This promise that all who desire to live godly in Christ will suffer persecution should not be something that discourages us but rather encourages us because Jesus Himself said that we are BLESSED when we are persecuted or hated because of Him!

Matthew 5:10-12 “¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. ¹² Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

John 15:18-21 “¹⁸ “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you. ¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.²¹ But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me.”

The reality is that in the last days, persecution against those who desire to live godly will increase. Will we fold under the pressure, or will we shine boldly as lights in the darkness?

Let’s now move on to the second “but you” statement Paul tells Timothy...

2. But You MUST (vs 13-17)

“¹³ But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. ¹⁴ But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, ¹⁵ and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

Paul tells Timothy that in the last days, deception and persecution will only grow. There will be outright evil men who are imposters. This means that they will be as wolves in sheep’s clothing who will lead men astray.

But notice what Paul tells Timothy he must do in light of this ever-increasing deception:

¹⁴ But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of”

“**continue**” – hold fast to; cling tightly; to cleave

- To hold on so strongly to something with no intention of letting it go

What exactly was Timothy to hold fast to amidst all of the deception? He was to cling to the Word of God: the only remedy for deception!

It's as though Paul says to Timothy "Timmy boy! Whatever you do, do not let go of what you know!".

Deceivers and the deception they propagate have been around since the very beginning, with Satan himself being the chief deceiver. Since Eden, Satan has sought to get people *to turn away from what God has said*.

Still to this day, this is Satan's goal. He wants everyone to abandon the Word of God and make up their "own truth". The absolute truth of the Word of God is the only way we will not buy into the vain and hollow philosophies of this world. *We must cleave to this book!!!* Oh how the world is relentlessly trying to get us to waver regarding the truth of the Bible!

"The Bible will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from the Bible." – DL Moody

Notice how Paul exhorts Timothy to continue in the things that he has both *learned* and been *assured* of. This is a word for some of us tonight.

- "**learned**" – to come to the knowledge/understanding of something
- "**assured**" – to have that which one has learned settled in their heart as truth

Some have learned the Scriptures but have not been assured of them. Some have been brought up in the ways of the Lord and have understood much of the Word but have not had these things settled in their heart.

I would like to ask you all today, have you come to the understanding in your very heart that this Book is indeed TRUTH and LIFE?

We must be *assured* and have all of our confidence in the truth of the Word of God. Only by It can we truly know who God is and what He wants for us.

I love how Paul says that these Holy Scriptures that Timothy had learned and been assured of from, even his childhood, are *able to make one wise for salvation* through faith in Christ Jesus. This is truly an awesome statement.

The word "for" when Paul says "wise for salvation" means "unto salvation" and what this means is that the Scriptures bring us to salvation in Christ! The Scriptures point us to Jesus!

John 5:39 ³⁹ You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me."

Luke 4:16-21 ¹⁶ So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. ¹⁷ And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

18 “The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon Me,
 Because He has anointed Me
 To preach the gospel to *the* poor;
 He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
 To proclaim liberty to *the* captives
 And recovery of sight to *the* blind,
 To set at liberty those who are oppressed;
 19 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”

20 Then He closed the book, and gave *it* back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. 21 And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

Hebrews 10:7 “In the volume of the book it is written of Me”

“The Scriptures have “power.” They are “able to make one wise to salvation.” They are not a cold, tame, dead thing. There is no book that has so much “power” as the Bible; none that is so efficient in moving the hearts, and consciences, and intellects of mankind. There is no book that has moved so many minds; none that has produced so deep and permanent effects on the world.” – Albert Barnes

16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

The Word of God is so much more than just a tool on our toolbelt, it is the very *lifeblood* of the believer! We simply cannot afford to neglect this book! We cannot let it be a dust collector in our homes! We must have our face in it daily because by it we commune with God!

“The vigor of our spiritual life will be in exact proportion to the place held by the Bible in our life and thoughts.” – George Muller

“I am a man of one book” – John Wesley

All Scripture is “God-breathed”. God Himself has given us His Word. Some critique it because it was written by fallible men. While it is true that it was written by fallible men, it was *authored* by an infallible God. God simply used men as His instruments to pen His holy Bible.

This famous passage in 2 Timothy 3 tells us that Scripture profits/benefits us in some very specific ways:

“**doctrine**” – teaching

1. Of who God is (His nature)
2. Of how He wants us to live

“**reproof**” – conviction of sin

- I don’t think you need me to tell you that this book convicts you! We all know this for ourselves.

“**correction**” – restoration/improvement of character

- This speaks of how this Book not only convicts us of our sin, but restores us to a better way
“**instruction in righteousness**” – training/discipline in integrity, virtue, purity, correct thinking
- By heeding the Word of God, we will live in a way that is honoring and right before the Lord

All these things are happening simultaneously as we give God’s Word its proper place in our lives. It works to make us “complete” and “thoroughly equip us for every good work”.

“**complete**” – perfect, whole

“**thoroughly equipped**” – fully furnished for every good work

- Buying a fully furnished home: it is supplied with everything that is needed

It’s been said before that we should actively be intaking the Word of God in 5 specific ways:

1. Hearing it – listening to sound Bible teaching
 - “faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God”
2. Reading it – word for word on our own daily with the Lord in a quiet place
3. Studying it – diving deep and dissecting/rightly dividing it
 - **2 Timothy 2:15** “¹⁵ Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”
4. Memorizing it – storing it up in our hearts
 - **Psalms 119:11** “¹¹ Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.”
5. Meditating on it – considering it deeply, murmuring to ourselves throughout the day
 - **Psalms 1:1-3** “Blessed *is* the man
Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners,
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
² But his delight *is* in the law of the Lord,
And in His law he meditates day and night.
³ He shall be like a tree
Planted by the rivers of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also shall not wither;
And whatever he does shall prosper.”

I’m fully convinced that if you are actively intaking God’s Word in these ways, everything about you will entirely change.

We’re a little over 3 months into the year which no doubt means that some who aimed to read the Bible every day have not been keeping that commitment. I want to encourage you today to press into the Scriptures daily and watch your relationship with the Lord soar to new heights!

Let’s wrap up by looking at Paul’s final “but you” statement to Timothy...

3. But You BE (4:1-5)

“I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: ² Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. ³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; ⁴ and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. ⁵ But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

What a solemn charge Paul gives Timothy here! It’s as though Paul tells Timothy “remember the gravity of why you’re doing this work of ministry!”.

Because of the appearing and coming kingdom of Christ when He will judge the world, Paul instructs young pastor Timothy to be busy about God’s business by doing some specific things:

- Preach the word – the very Word of God we just spent much time talking about is what Timothy is to preach!
 - Now, not everyone has a call to preach the Word in the way that we think of preaching, but we’re all called to be sharing the Word with everyone we know
- Being ready always – ready for what? Ready for the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ; and being ready for every opportunity to make Him known to others!
- Convincing – correcting, not according to one’s own opinion but according to the Word of God
- Rebuking – to call out wrongdoing
- Exhorting – to strongly urge

Why was it so important that Timothy be doing all of these things according to the Word? Because there was a time coming when sound doctrine will not be endured.

“**endure**” – to bear with or listen to

We are truly living in times when sound doctrine is not being endured. Much of the so-called “Church” has abandoned sound doctrine for the sake of relevancy and people-pleasing.

The thing about sound doctrine is that it does sting a little bit. It’s like hydrogen peroxide on an open wound: it doesn’t always feel good, but *it heals!* It tells us that we can’t do the things that satisfy our sinful flesh if we’re in the business of living for God.

“**itching ears**” – the desire to hear something pleasant. Just tell me something to make me feel good about myself (the exact opposite of repentance!). Tell me what I want to hear, not what I need to hear.

Because they have these itching ears, they’ll just find people that tell them what they want to hear. They do this to their own damnation because they turn away from truth. Oh how so much preaching across America today has abandoned the Word of God to satisfy itching ears.

And Paul tells Timothy amidst all of this that he is not to be this way. “But you (Timothy)…”

“be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

“**watchful**” – being on guard in everything

“**endure afflictions**” – like Paul showed Timothy how to endure afflictions for the sake of the Gospel, so Timothy was to endure trouble for the cause of Christ

“**do the work of an evangelist**” – one who brings the good news

- As we were exhorted on Sunday by Ray Comfort, we must share the Gospel because it is God’s will that none should perish but that all should come to the knowledge of Christ as Lord and Savior

“**fulfill your ministry**” – fulfilling what God has called you to do

- While this was written to Timothy regarding pastoral ministry, God has a ministry that we’re all a part of:
 - **2 Corinthians 5:18-21** ¹⁸ Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us *the ministry of reconciliation*, ¹⁹ that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.
²⁰ Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

As we all are dwelling in the midst of a Christ-rejecting world, we are to be doing God’s work. May we be those who are found DOING.

Conclusion:

In closing, my prayer for you all today is that we would all be those who are radically different in every way from the world because we are a sanctified people by the blood of Christ.

May we be those who count the cost of following Christ and if persecution comes to us, we don’t fold but flourish.

May we be those who hold fast to the Word of God, having been assured of it as the source of all truth and all that we need to live a godly life.

May we be those actively doing the work of the ministry that God has called us all to be a part of.

The world will grow worse and worse, BUT YOU.