

Rob Thomas, 18 January 2026

"You, however..." (v10)

That's how it starts.

Paul the Apostle

writing to Timothy the young church leader.

"You, however..."

We know what that means.

It means

that what Paul is about to write to Timothy  
is going to be in contrast  
to what Paul has just written  
immediately beforehand.

And here's what Paul has just written.

It starts in v1:

"...mark this. There will be terrible times in the last days.

People will be *lovers of themselves*,

*lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive,  
disobedience to their parents,  
ungrateful, unholy,  
without love, unforgiving, slanderous ...*"

That's not the end –

I could read much more!

In fact, if you have the Bible text in front of you,

you'll see that it goes on like that  
for five verses,

and nineteen different counts  
of godless and evil  
behaviour.

2 Ti 3<sup>10-17</sup>

Lk 4<sup>14-21</sup>

These, says Paul,

are the challenging characteristics of the world  
in which Timothy must stand fast  
as a witness to the Lord Jesus Christ.

But that's not all.

It's worse than that, much worse.

And the worst of it is

that these kinds of sinfulness and depravity  
are to be found not only in the world  
but, appallingly, also  
in the Church.

In the Church,

where there are people who (v5)  
"[have] a form of godliness  
but [deny] its power."

That is to say,

people who are outwardly godly,  
who make sure to appear to others  
as being respectable Christian believers,  
even leaders in the Church –

but who, in reality,  
lack any kind of genuine grasp  
of the Christian faith.

And who make easy prey of vulnerable people,  
including exploiting women  
alone in their homes  
while their husbands are absent.

They draw such victims in  
to their warped and self-indulgent way of life  
even as their depravity  
denies the very truth  
that they claim to represent.

What a formidable challenge for Timothy –  
for the young, inexperienced, timid  
Timothy.

But now we come to v10:  
“*You, however...*”

For you, Timothy,  
things are different.  
Different for two reasons.

The first is in vv10-11,  
where Paul says to Timothy:  
“*You, however, know all about my teaching,  
my way of life,  
my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance,  
persecutions, sufferings,  
what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch,  
Iconium and Lystra,  
the persecutions I endured.  
Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them.*”

Here's the first reason  
for Timothy to be reassured that,  
in the face of these huge challenges,  
things are to be different for him.

The first reason is  
that Timothy has,  
right before him,  
the example of the life of the Apostle Paul.  
Paul rightly reminds Timothy of what he has seen  
of the quality of Paul's life and witness.

That's why Paul spells it all out  
as we just read  
in vv10-11.

This is not self-promotion:  
it's for Timothy's benefit,  
to build his confidence in God  
as he develops in Christian leadership.

It's clear that Paul practises what he preaches  
and is willing to suffer for it.

His life has been consistently righteous,  
self-controlled,  
faithful, and loving.

He's remained steadfast to his principles  
through many grave persecutions.

Persecutions that are inevitable for an apostle.

Indeed, we remember the words

with which the risen Lord Jesus  
commissioned Paul into this role  
in Acts 9<sup>15</sup>:

*"... This man is my chosen instrument  
to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings  
and before the people of Israel.  
I will show him how much he must suffer  
for my name."*

And Timothy has witnessed all of this.

He's been privileged to see at first hand  
the authentic faithful life of the Apostle Paul,  
so as to draw from it  
an example  
and an encouragement.

That's the first reason  
for Timothy to be reassured and encouraged that,  
in the face of these huge challenges,  
things are to be different for him.

And the second reason, says Paul,  
is Timothy's knowledge of the Scriptures.

vv14-17: *"... As for you, continue in what you have learned  
and have become convinced of,  
because you know those from whom you learned it,  
and how from infancy  
you have known the holy Scriptures,  
which are able to make you wise  
for salvation  
through faith in Christ Jesus."*

*All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching,  
rebuking, correcting  
and training in righteousness,  
so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped  
for every good work."*

Now, unlike Timothy, you and I don't have first-hand access  
to view an apostle's life.

But we do have the Scriptures.  
A greater advantage, in fact, than Timothy had  
because we have the Word of God written  
and read out,  
whereas although the OT was complete,  
the NT was not fully compiled in Timothy's lifetime.  
But we are privileged to have it all.

So where did these Scriptures come from?

Well, here's how Peter describes the process:

This is 2 Pet 1<sup>20-21</sup>: "Above all, you must understand  
that no prophecy of Scripture  
came about by the prophet's own interpretation.  
For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man,  
but men spoke from God  
as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

Now the prophets and apostles  
who were moved by God in these ways  
were not being used  
as mere dictating machines.  
Each communicated in his own unique way.

In fact, one of the tools that scholars use  
in answering difficult questions  
about who wrote what  
is to judge whether a particular passage  
sounds like Paul, or Peter, or Luke,  
whether it's consistent  
with his manner of writing,  
and his theological emphasis.

Scripture originated in God's mind  
and was communicated from God's mouth  
by God's breath or spirit,  
and we call it the Word of God because God spoke it.

For example, in Isaiah,  
the prophet speaks (eg 40<sup>5</sup>) and then he declares  
"... *the mouth of the Lord has spoken.*"

The Biblical authors spoke and wrote their words  
in their own way  
and in their own historical and social context,  
but behind it all  
was the invisible guiding hand  
of the Holy Spirit of God.

This means all Scripture, OT and NT.  
Paul makes that point very succinctly  
In this very letter (1 Ti 4<sup>18</sup>).

Let's look at this carefully, because it shows us  
something important.  
1 Ti 4<sup>18</sup> "For the Scripture says, 'Do not muzzle the ox  
while it is treading out the grain',  
and  
'The worker deserves his wages'".

Now, as we look carefully at this,  
and ask where Paul takes those two quotations from,  
we realise what he's done!

You see, he's taken an OT quotation  
(Do not muzzle the ox while it's trading out the grain) –  
which comes from Dt 25<sup>4</sup> –  
and he's taken a NT quotation  
(The worker deserves his wages) –  
which is a quotation from Jesus in Luke 10<sup>7</sup>. –  
he's taken an OT quotation  
and a NT quotation  
and he's put them right next to each other  
and he calls them all 'Scripture'!

So that's the first point in v16 –  
the question of what Scripture is:  
"All Scripture is God-breathed..."

It is God-breathed, God-inspired.  
That's what Scripture is.

Then Paul goes on to tell us what Scripture is for.

Look at verse 16.  
It's "God breathed  
and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting,  
and training and righteousness  
so that the man of God  
may be thoroughly equipped  
for every good work."

In fact, Paul begins this explanation of what Scripture is  
in verse 15  
where he says that the holy Scriptures  
are able to make you wise for salvation  
through faith in Christ Jesus.

The Bible is essentially a handbook of salvation!  
Its overarching purpose is to teach  
not facts of science –  
we can discover those  
by our own study of the world around us –  
not facts of science but facts of salvation  
which no human exploration can discover,  
but only God can reveal.

The whole Bible unfolds the divine scheme of salvation.  
Let's summarise it now.

Let's summarise what we know of God's great plan  
of salvation.  
And as we do that, let's think about how we know these things...

First, mankind's creation in God's image  
How do you and I know  
that we are created in the image of God?  
Well, we know about it  
only because God has disclosed it to us  
in His Word.

## How do we know that?

Same answer:

only because God has disclosed it to us  
in His Word.

God's continuing love for us  
in spite of our rebellion...

Same Q, same A:  
through His Word.

And then God's eternal plan to save us  
through his covenant of grace  
with the chosen people,  
culminating in the coming of Christ as Saviour,  
and His dying to bear our sin.

We know about that, too,  
only because God has disclosed it to us  
in His Word.

And Jesus' resurrection from death,  
His Ascension to heaven  
to send us the Holy Spirit  
to give us new life  
and the power to live it.

How do we know?  
Only through His Word.

And our own transformation  
from guilty sinners under penalty of death and hell,  
to forgiven sinners, men and women made new,  
beloved sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father  
Who delights to give us new life with Him,  
now and in eternity.

None of these glorious truths  
would or could be known  
apart from the Biblical revelation.  
Only through the Word  
do we hear this news!

Only through God having spoken  
to the Prophets and Apostles of old,  
who declared His words to the people,  
who preserved it,  
repeated it,  
wrote it down,  
sent it out  
to create and nourish the Church.

And here stand you and I this morning,  
as inheritors of all of that salvation history,  
sustained and fed  
by the same Word.

In our pluralist and permissive society,  
some Christians are swept from their moorings  
by the flood tide of sin and error.

But the Apostle Paul says to us  
as he did to Timothy:  
Stand firm.  
Never mind if the pressure to conform  
is very strong.  
Never mind if you're young, inexperienced,  
timid and weak.  
Never mind if you find yourself alone  
in your witnessing.

You've followed my teaching so far,  
says Paul.

Now continue  
in what you have come to believe.  
You know the Biblical credentials of your faith.  
Scripture is God breathed  
and profitable  
even in the midst of these grievous times  
in which evil men and imposters  
go from bad to worse.

It can make you complete  
and it will equip you for your work.  
Let the Word of God make you into  
a man or woman of God!  
Don't doubt it  
and it will lead you on into Christian maturity.

And let me add a word,  
not from our passage,  
but from my experience.

Some Christians, for their knowledge of Scripture,  
rely on what is read out in Church  
on a Sunday.

Now, I don't knock that at all!  
Keep it up!

But it's not a sufficient diet.  
For that, we should aim to be reading a Bible passage  
every day.

There are lots of notes available to help you do that.  
I know that many of you already use  
some form of daily Bible reading notes.

If you don't currently do that,  
I can show you some notes as an example,  
and I can help you get hold of them.

Just grab me at the end.

Another fruitful exercise,  
if you haven't already tried it,  
is to read the Bible in big chunks,  
perhaps reading the whole thing once a year.  
That can give you a really fresh perspective,  
and there are simple schemes  
to help you do it.

And also how about trying out a homegroup –  
perhaps first try it for six weeks in Lent,  
which starts in the middle of February.

Spend an hour of two  
exploring God's Word with other like-minded pilgrims,  
and see what different people make  
of the passage  
as they share points of view.

Yes, Scripture can make you complete  
and it will equip you for your work.

Let the Word of God make you into  
a man or woman of God!

Don't doubt it  
and it will lead you on into Christian maturity.

Thanks be to God for His Word.

**Amen**