

14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, **15** and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. **16** All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, **17** so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Take Your Time

It's been said, "Time flies when you're having fun," but it's also said, "The older you are the faster time flies." So does that mean the older you are the more fun you have? To be honest, I don't know what happened to this last week. Time flew by when I didn't want it to and it wasn't fun. As a child I remember weeks seemed like years, an hour felt like an eternity, a fifteen minute sermon felt like the never-ending story. But somehow or another time marches on. While we may be bored in one moment wishing time would fly a little faster, there are other moments when we wish we could slow down or stop. But either way - time isn't working for you. It's against you. Counting down until you have no more time left. Our time is limited. It's something to be treasured and carefully guarded. Edison wrote, "Time is the only capital that any human being has and the only thing he can't afford to lose." If you lose money you can always get it back through hard work but if you lose your time, it's gone forever.

We have a limited amount of time that's the bad news and sometimes the good news, Whether you wish time would stop or fly a little faster - Paul's Words, God's Word for us today is to continue in the Word of God. Take your time.

Paul seems to have all the time in the world. Here he is writing another letter to Timothy. But unlike his first imprisonment, when he was under house arrest in Rome, living out of a "rented house," (Acts 28:30) Paul is now in prison, chained like a common criminal, and he is cold - asking in chapter 4 for Timothy to bring his cloak before winter. Paul is well aware that he doesn't have much time left. In 2 Timothy 4:6 - Paul writes, "*My time for departure is at hand.*" In some ways prison can be a blessing because it makes you slow down and take your time. In other areas prison is a horrible waste of time because you can't do anything for those you love. When you see them suffer and struggle all you can do is write to them. But for now, Paul was under what some would consider a very bad time, with death staring in his face he had plenty of time to pray, and clearly see what mattered most in life. He takes his time to encourage Timothy.

Timothy had spent so much time with Paul. He was one of his traveling companions. He went with him and sacrificed so much time. Paul wrote of Timothy, "*I have no one like him*" (Philippians 2:19-23). While in Prison he writes his faithful friend this last farewell urging Timothy to *continue on*

in what he has learned and become convinced of - If Timothy were to consider the outcome of his life and the sacrifices he made - might consider the cost and think, "It's a waste of time."

Timothy knows what happened to Paul. He probably saw it happen in his home town of Lystra - there Paul was dragged outside of the city and stoned with rocks and left for dead. This wasn't the only time he saw Paul suffer. Paul was beaten with clubs and imprisoned time and time again. Paul and Timothy know that they are not living the best life ever. Paul writes in verse 13, "*everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.*" Is it worth it? All the sacrifices they have made, all the time lost? In spite of all their work they are not greeted with the cheers of joy and accolades of the world but in these last days they will find trouble, imprisonment, suffering to the point of death. Maybe it's at this time that Timothy begins to think, "It's time to call it quits. Retire from the ministry. Take it easy for a while. After all if anything, "You've earned it." But Paul calls to Timothy.

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, 15 and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

We're not imprisoned. We've got time. Sometimes we have more time than we know what to do with at other times we have more money than time and can't find a break. We're overworked, overstressed, and overwhelmed by the work we have to accomplish. Time doesn't seem to be helping either. So much to do and yet that time is limited. So how do we use this precious gift - this irreplaceable resource that God has given?

"Continue in the ways of the world." Hold on to this world for all it's worth invest all your time in what you can gain from this world. Searching for the time of our life. Paul doesn't need to urge us to do that because that comes quite naturally for us. Often our priorities are evident in how we spend our time. What do you see? Work, things, experiences, wealth, materialism - we have a way of chasing after things that have no lasting value - but our time is limited and these things won't last. Jesus asked, "*What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?*" Yes we're all going to die. No you can't take it with you but we'll strive after all that we can get in the meantime?

Sometimes we act as if we are completely clueless to the blessings of a Christian Education and the sacrifices of having children. No, it doesn't take much talent or ability to conceive a child - sometimes it happens by accident - but it takes a lifetime to raise a child. It's not a one shot - I gave them the Word once - we are to continually put before them God's promise - bring them up from infancy in God's Word. Christian education may not be seen as urgent but as optional. Sadly confirmation is seen as graduation rite and not the bare minimum of what it means to be a Christian. That means we should look at confirmation in much the same regard as graduating from Kindergarten. You're just getting started. But we don't have time.

Living a godly life won't earn you the accolades and praises of the world. It will be labeled a waste of time you might even believe them - after all, "I know this already. I'm doing better than most people." So we set ourselves up for failure because we don't set aside time.

Christian Education is a salvation thing. These Words, this teaching is able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Salvation is free but it is not cheap. It takes time to hear how God gave his time for us.

God gave us his Word which is God breathed or Spirit infused. The Spirit is at Work in the Word and so it is never a waste of time. These Words and this Spirit are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Look at how the Spirit was at work in Timothy - teaching and convincing him of what he had known through God's Word. Look at how the Spirit filled word was at work in Timothy's life as an infant (young child) this same word refers to John the baptizer while in the womb of his mother. God's Word came to Timothy via the mouth of his mother Eunice and his Grandmother Lois. They knew that his heathen Father - a could care less about christianity but from early on they took the time to tell him what God had done. They shared the words of everlasting life with him.

The Words of what their savior had done for them. How Jesus took his precious time to come down and serve those who wouldn't give him the time of day. He came to the world that didn't want to have their extended weekend interrupted, he came to those who wasted his time and he gladly gave them not only his time but his life. It wasn't just the hours on the cross but his whole life leading up to that time. He gave his perfect life from the little boy sitting among the rabbis asking questions because he just had to be in his Father's house - to the time he took to teach and point people to his work for them. That time wasn't wasted.

Just look at how the humble efforts of Lois and Eunice, invested in Timothy produced an abundant harvest. Would his mother and grandmother realize that we'd still be talking about the time they took almost 2,000 years after the fact? Did they realize at the time that the time they invested in Timothy would end up with him being a leader in the church, church planter, and companion to the apostle Paul? Would Paul and Timothy realize the impact of the Holy Spirit working through their words through all these years? All of this was God working through them.

Just as God worked through those who have gone before us, he also works through you. Home devotion is never a waste of time. Sunday School is never a waste of time. God is at work, working through your words. Paul writes, "*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*"

Not only did God take the time to send his Son, he also took the time to speak and record his Word. Here we find Words that are useful for rebuking and correcting. Scripture not only for pointing out our flaws and failings but also for guiding us in paths of righteousness. Training in righteousness that is outside of you. This is the righteousness of God in which we are trained. We are equipped with every good work finished in Christ. We are completely and fully forgiven in Christ, forgiven for wasting our and God's, forgiven for neglecting the hearing of his Word, and encouraged to live a new life.

We are equipped to go out. May the Spirit working through these words - work in you a desire to spend your time wisely. To sacrifice your time for others. Maybe you'll take some time to teach the little ones, or spend the time to bring them to church on Sunday. Maybe you'll study for yourself and become better educated so you can share the Word with others. No matter what you do in life, whether you have extra time or no time. Our time is limited. As we begin another year we ask God to bless our time, our Sunday School teachers, our confirmation students as we take our time to listen and be equipped in every good work in Christ. Amen.