**Dealing With Difficult Times: Continuing and Convinced** John E Brown

2 Tim 3:1-7 January 20, 2019

2 Tim 3:12-17

* Paul provides us with some great advice about how to navigate the secular culture in which we live and to whom we have been sent. He gives us some strong words to empower and stabilize our approach to the year ahead.
  + “But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” **2 Timothy 3:1-7 NASB**
* Paul aptly describes what he calls ‘difficult times’ and how those ‘difficulties’ manifest in the culture and in people.
  + People will be:
    - Lovers of self.
    - Lovers of money.
    - Boastful.
    - Arrogant.
    - Revilers.
    - Disobedient to parents.
    - Ungrateful.
    - Unholy.
    - Unloving.
    - Irreconcilable.
    - Malicious gossips.
    - Treacherous.
    - Reckless.
    - Conceited.
    - Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.
    - Holding to a form of godliness although they have denied its power.
    - Always learning but never able to recognize the truth.
* In difficult times, like those in Paul’s day and the day’s in which we live, we have to learn to live, give and forgive without giving in or giving up.
  + We need to live in a manner that people who are ‘trapped’ by the spirit of the age can know that there is ‘another king’ and another kingdom.
    - “Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. But evil men and impostors will proceed *from bad* to worse, deceiving and being deceived.You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” **2 Timothy 3:12-17 NASB**
* We are not promised a ‘road without potholes.’ When you read the descriptions of how worldly a culture can become (2 Timothy 3-7) then you know we will live with many challenges.
  + “But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having won over the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. But while the disciples stood around him, he got up and entered the city. The next day he went away with Barnabas to Derbe.After they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch,strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and *saying*, “Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.” **Acts 14:19-22 NASB**
* Evil men and imposters will go from bad to worse; being deceived and working deception but we can’t be deceived by their propaganda.
  + Our response is found in 2 Timothy 3:14.
    - “You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*,” **2 Timothy 3:14 NASB**
    - We are supposed to continue in the things we have learned and become convinced of. (verse 14)
    - Learning here in this verse means things we have learned by instruction, inquiring and experience. (verse 14)
* To continue means to abide, stay or remain in what we have learned.
  + “For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day. Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to *you*.You are aware of the fact that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.” **2 Timothy 1:12-15 NASB**
  + “Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.” **Hebrews 10:35-36 NASB**
  + “So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” **John 8:31-32 NASB**
    - We are to continue in what we have learned and been convinced of (verse 14)
    - …”The things we know are true” Phillips NT
    - …”The things you’ve been led to rely on.” Williams NT
    - …”The things you firmly believe.” RSV
  + “For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face, that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and *attaining* to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, *resulting* in a true knowledge of God’s mystery, *that is*, Christ *Himself*, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.I say this so that no one will delude you with persuasive argument.” **Colossians 2:1-4 NASB**
  + “for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit,” **1 Thessalonians 1:5-6 NASB**
  + **“**But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation, though we are speaking in this way. For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints. And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” **Hebrews 6:9-12 NASB**
  + “Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since *we have* a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.” **Hebrews 10:19-25 NASB**
* “But you, be continuing in the things which you learned and were convinced of.” **2 Timothy 3:14 Transline N.T.**
* “But you must remain faithful to the things you have been taught, you know they are true.” **2 Timothy 3:14 NLT**