

The Peace-Making Pastor

2 Timothy 2:24-26

Introduction

In 2 Timothy chapter 2 Paul's focus had been on the roles and responsibilities of the Pastors and leaders. Some of those duties have included reminding your people of the great scriptural truths (v.14a); warnings about petty arguments (vv.14b,16); Paul gave examples of false teachers; naming them by name (vv.16-17) and exposed their error (vv.18-19). We were instructed to present our bodies as clean vessels to God (vv.20-21); avoiding evil, pursuing good (v.22).

In brief the leaders flee immorality; follow Jesus, avoid foolish discussions and refuse unnecessary quarrels (v.24).

Now Paul will give further instructions about the character and the conduct of the *doulas (the servant) of the Lord (v.24)*. Paul describes the Pastor's demeanor and discipline (v.24) when dealing with opposition (v.25). Our goal is to bring about repentance (v.26).

Can we completely eliminate strife and contention?

Probably not.

How are we to solve problems and resolve conflict in the setting of the church?

The Pastor serves as peace-maker not trouble maker.

The Pastor's Demeanor (v.24)

2 Timothy 2:24 (NKJV) 24 And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient,

The servant translates the Greek noun *doulas—the slave by choice*. This is the person who identifies as a Jesus lover—the person who really wants to serve the Lord. Pause and think about what the text demands. The person who is in a bitter struggle or fight or quarrel cannot at the same time be serving the LORD—even if they claim they are serving the Lord. The command is clear—“The servant of the Lord must not strive—or quarrel”.

The expression must not quarrel could read—must not breed quarrels or generate quarrels; the idea being that the controversy or quarrel should not begin with the Pastor.

Some people pick fights. Don't argue over words to no profit (vv.14;16). Paul warned Timothy to avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing they generate strife (v.23).

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The Pastor in contrast must be gentle or patient or kind to all. This is a most difficult expectation at least for me. I am not one who wants to start a fight but have no qualms about bringing them to a close.

The Pastor's response is kind, reasonable, considerate—dare I say—soft and tender.

Paul describes his own approach to the believers in Thessaloniki; *“But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children”* (2 Thess. 2:7). To the saints in Colossae Paul wrote; *“bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do”* (Colossians 3:13).

The Pastor's demeanor must include the ability to teach (1 Timothy 3:2) and patience. Here the word teaching includes the idea of skillful teaching.

You cannot teach the truth unless you know the truth. Biblical truth helps us resolve conflicts. The Pastor needs to know what God's Word says about handling problems. The Pastor needs the leading of God's Holy Spirit. Jesus told His disciples to teach and observe His commands (Matt. 28:20).

Timothy would have to remain confident in the truth of the gospel. Timothy would need to exercise patience with all who were willing to learn.

The word translated *patient* is found only here in the Greek New Testament. It is the compound of *anecho—hold up—and kakos—bad or evil—*This is something more than just garden variety patience. This is the kind of patience that holds up in the presence of ills or wrongs. The Greek scholars Arndt and Gingrich suggested this means “bearing evil without resentment”. The NASB reads “patient when wronged”. This is the kind of patience that refuses to give in to the temptation towards resentment.

The Pastor's Discipline (v.25)

25 in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth,

The Pastor must not respond with arrogance but humility. The goal in dealing with those in opposition is to gently lead them to a correct understanding of the truth. **This is not possible if we cut them out or cut them off. We must find a way to maintain contact—and at the same time resist their error.** We are not looking to antagonize opponents but rather looking for a way to calmly and gently correct the bad thinking or wrong ideas.

The presence of discipline does not mean the absence of kindness, gentleness, patience.

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Saint Francis de Sales wrote; “*Nothing is so strong as gentleness, nothing so gentle as real strength.*” Thomas Fuller said, “*Soft words are hard arguments.*”

Only the truly strong and great can be truly tender. Tenderness is the mark of nobility, not weakness.

Who are the ones in opposition? The context seems to indicate these are unbelievers (captive to Satan; v.26). It might include believers who are influenced or even deceived by the false teachers.

Avoiding Satan’s Trap: Deception (v.26)

26and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

The goal of the Pastor is to bring them back into fellowship and not punish them. Clearly the Lord does not want “any to perish, but all to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9 NRSV).

Satan is a liar and the Father of lies.

What are the advantages of embracing Paul’s advice? We help people come to their senses. Fighting, arguing and quarreling only makes matters worse.

It would appear that meekness and humility is God’s strategy to deal with the schemes of the Devil.

Galatians 6:1-2; “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

The expression “. . .that they may come to their senses” can be translated “return to sobriety or soberness.” There is a hint of diminished capacity—intoxication—from outside sources. The false teachers are ‘drunk’ and under the influence of Satan and are losing their senses (see *Life Application Bible Commentary* p. 197).

The willing participants in the foolish fighting are at risk. Satan can take advantage. In the end Satan serves as the source to fuel controversies.

A united Church is strong. A divided Church is weak.

Conclusion

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11-08-19

1. Why is it important to solve conflicts and resolve problems?

1. What role does the Bible play in solving problems in the life of the Church?

1. Would you say you are kind and gentle to the people you disagree with?

1. Why is it so hard to persuade people to repent of their sin and trust Christ?

1. What are some of the things you can do to be a peace-maker instead of a trouble maker?