

2 Timothy 2:14-16

Sunday, August 16th • Riverside Calvary Chapel
“Unashamed Workers”

SLIDE 1: TITLE

RECAP/SETUP

If you remember last week's passage, we covered the first part of chapter 2 where Paul encourages Timothy in his pastoral role (at the church in Ephesus) to teach and train up other believers in the truth of Christ.

(SLIDE 2)

He tells Timothy in [verse 2](#) of this chapter to take “the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

I love this verse because it shows multiple generations of discipleship. (SLIDE 3)

You have Paul (#1 [SLIDE 4](#)) reminding Timothy (#2 [SLIDE 5](#)) to consider the essential gospel truths that he has been trained in among many witnesses (also #2) then to commit those truths to faithful men (#3 [SLIDE 6](#)) so they can also teach others (#4 [SLIDE 7](#))

This is how the church should be operating. The spiritually mature believer in the church need to come alongside and train the lesser mature believers by pouring into them so they too can mature and disciple others as well.

This is the responsibility Paul is encouraging Timothy in. To Pastor a church that seeks to accomplish this goal of discipleship takes a lot of work, which would make Timothy a worker for God.

A worker, as Paul says in our passage, “**who does not need to be ashamed**”

This chapter also contains [5 metaphors](#) ([SLIDE 8](#)) that Paul gives to describe the christian life. Last week we looked at the first 3: ([SLIDE 9](#))

- [Soldiers](#)
- [Farmers](#)
- [Athletes](#)

This week we're looking at Workers, the 4th metaphor Paul gives ([SLIDE 10](#))

- [Workers](#)

Next week's passage will cover the 5th metaphor Vessel ([SLIDE 11](#))

- [Vessels](#)

These analogies are helpful in describing how us Christians should live.

We'll be focusing on that forth one today, being a worker of God.

([SLIDE 12: TITLE](#))

PASSAGE TEXT ([SLIDES 13-15](#))

2 Timothy 2:14-19

Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. 15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, **a worker who does not need to be ashamed**, rightly dividing the word of truth. 16 But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. 17 And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus

are of this sort, 18 who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some. 19 Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

PRAY

(SLIDE 16: TITLE)

OUTLINE

We're going to go through this passage in order with the focus "Unashamed Workers", and here's an outline we'll follow.

UNASHAMED WORKERS (SLIDE 17)

2 Timothy 2:14-19 Outline:

1. The Reminder For Workers - 2:14
2. The Right Worker - 2:15
3. The Wrong Worker - 2:16-18
4. The Reward of a Worker - 2:19

MAIN BODY

1. The Reminder For Workers - 2:14

(SLIDE 18) 2 Timothy 2:14 - "Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers."

REMIND

Here Paul encourages Timothy to "remind them of these things" There are some clear truths that Paul has shared in this passage that believers need to be encouraged in.

(SLIDE 19) "These things" specifically could be referring to

2:8 - "Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel"

2:11-13 - "This is a faithful saying:

For if we died with Him,

We shall also live with Him.

12 If we endure,

We shall also reign with Him.

If we deny Him,

He also will deny us.

13 If we are faithless,

He remains faithful;

He cannot deny Himself.

Who's the "them" in this passage that Paul's referring to?

Either he's speaking generally of the hearers in Timothy's church, or he's speaking specifically of the faithful men (cf 2:2) under Timothy who are charged in ministering to and teaching others in the church. Most likely the second.

(SLIDE 20)

WORDS TO NO PROFIT

Paul tells Timothy to “[charge] them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit”
This is a big issue that Paul addresses in this passage that we need to understand.

The greek verb used here for describing the kind of words is logomacheō literally meaning ‘word fight’
Some translations may describe this a quarrelling about words.

Essentially, Paul is talking about teachers who go on with their words that don’t really have any relevance for equipping and building people up in the Gospel.
It may take shape with them getting technical over certain words, caught up overexploiting minor doctrines, or just rambling on and on about thoughts and opinions.

In a nutshell, they were majoring in the minors, getting off the highways for the sake of the byways, and losing their audience in the process. That’s why Paul says it was “to no profit”

Timothy shouldn’t allow things that don’t matter to be a primary focus.
His job as pastor was to keep his congregation focused on the Gospel, standing firm in truth, and not allowing his church to become a community of constant debate, which can quickly become an environment that causes damage.

RUIN OF HEARERS

That’s why the last phrase Paul adds in this verse is that this is “to the ruin of the hearers.”

Have you ever sat through a sermon that seemed more like the speaker’s opportunity to speak their mind than teach the word of God? I hope that hasn’t been your experience here.

I’ll admit, It’s an easy temptation for a preacher to get ‘lost in the sauce.’ You start with one verse, then you notice a Greek word, and then you think, ‘Oh, that’s interesting.’ Ten minutes later we’re talking about the Roman Empire, ancient agriculture, and why Paul probably had a very specific opinion about sandals.

And somewhere around minute 17, you’re thinking, ‘Wait...what was the point again?’
That’s exactly what Paul is warning about. Don’t get so caught up in words that you lose the people you’re actually trying to help.”

Someone who preaches should be clear in their communication through the truths of the Gospel and God’s word, leading their audience on a clear marked path so no-one gets left behind on the way.

You should walk away from a sermon encouraged, built up, challenged, and more secure in your faith.
If the result of a sermon is your ruin, then that speaker has failed the job he set out to do.

These are great reminders we can all consider, as we continue to look at The Right Worker...

2. The Right Worker - 2:15

(SLIDE 21) 2 Timothy 2:15 - "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

(SLIDE 22) This verse shows us what a True worker looks like:

1. Presents themselves approved to God
2. Is Unashamed in their Work

3. Rightly divides the word of truth

APPROVED

Paul's next exhortation for Timothy is to **"be diligent to present yourself approved to God"** and this is not a one time action. If it were possible to simply present yourself approved to God, then there would be no need to be diligent to do so.

"Be diligent" Keep at it, remain faithful, endure for the service of the Lord.

That word **"Approved"** refers to what remains after testing, like metals refined by fire.

(SLIDE 23)

Two temptations of a pastor in "present yourself approved to God":

1. **Popularity:** A pastor's goal should be to present themselves approved to God instead of to people. That is a temptation in the role of a pastor is to seek people's approval, but if you compromise on your faithfulness to God you fail at your job.
 - If more pastors were faith in presenting themselves to God first, I'm confident the amount of scandals we hear about from lead pastors in the church would drop drastically
2. **Priority:** Firstly, Timothy had to present himself to God, his focus was not presenting other people approved to God, but himself
 - Solid Principle taught here. If it is not done, the end result will be blatant hypocrisy: Don't point out the speck in your brother's without removing the planking your own. Practice what you preach

WORKER... NOT... ASHAMED

Adding then **"a worker who does not need to be ashamed"** the title focus of our passage.

If you work poorly at a job, how embarrassed will you be when your work get's examined.

We're told in 2 Corinthians 5:10 that the work of every christian will be examined at the judgment seat of Christ

This is a motivator to do our Christian work diligently for the Lord, so we will not be ashamed when our work gets examined.

This idea is also something John mentions in his epistle:

(SLIDE 24)

1 John 2:28 - **"And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming."**

RIGHTLY DIVIDING

One form of work Timothy had to be diligent in was the **"rightly dividing [of] the word of truth"**

We get that translation **"rightly divide"** from the greek word **"orthotomeō"** meaning **"to make straight and smooth, to handle aright, to teach the truth directly and correctly"**

(SLIDE 25)

The Word of Truth defines the nature of scripture, a beacon of truth.

Teachers must carefully handle God's truth from His word accurately.

Solid and sound teaching of the Bible should not be something we compromise on in today's church.

There's a few ideas with this word. *orthotomeō*:

- to properly dissect

- to Plow Straight or Cut Straight
 - To Carefully Handle
- "Carefully handle" like you would with a sword.

You need to carefully handle a knife or sword, or risk causing harm to yourself or others. It's the same with how we handle the word of God

(SLIDE 26)

"Swords are meant to cut and hack, and wound, and kill with, and the word of truth is for pricking men in the heart and killing their sins. The word of God is not committed to God's ministers to amuse men with its glitter, nor to charm them with the jewels in its hilt, but to conquer their souls for Jesus."

(Spurgeon)

Teachers must be careful and responsible in how they teach God's word.

There should be a godly fear and a high reverence in their study and communication of it.

Scripture gives a warning if teachers fail at this is James 3:1.

(SLIDE 27)

James 3:1 - "My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment."

"rightly divide the word of truth"

(SLIDE 28: TITLE)

If there's a right way to divide the word of truth, that obviously implies there's a wrong way to divide the word of truth.

There is a right way and wrong way to interpret the word of God. Pastoral diligence to carefully study and teach correct interpretation of the Bible is the necessary aim.

Truth is not relative, we can't both be right if my truth contradicts your truth.

It's the same with scripture. If my interpretation of scripture completely contradicts someone else's we cannot both be correct.

Studying the Bible is all about revealing God's truth from it as it is His word, and our interpretation should be in line (with all our due diligence) with His intention of His word.

(SLIDE 29)

The Bible does not mean just what anyone wants it to mean. There may be many people trying to twist the Scriptures to their own ends, but they are wrongly dividing the word of truth. We can't just pick the interpretation that seems most comfortable to us and claim it as true – it must be rightly dividing the word of truth, and it must be consistent with what the Bible says in the specific passage and with the entire message of the Scriptures. (Guzik)

Example: In Matthew 7 Jesus teaches about judging others. You often hear from people, including some professing Christians saying that "Jesus said 'Do not judge'"

That is an incorrect interpretation of that Bible passage, and it is a wrongful division of the word of God.

(SLIDE 30) Here's the correct interpretation. Jesus taught in that passage ""Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you."

I don't see Jesus saying plainly "do not judge" here.

To their credit, I don't think we should be overly judgemental going around judging every single thing

about every single person we encounter. Which would inevitably influence the way we would treat them. That would be unfair and un-christ-like.

Simply put, Jesus is teaching that however we judge others, we need to be prepared to receive that same judgment ourselves.

If we can't handle that, then simply don't be the person to judge others.

The wise thing to do here, is to judge yourself first before judging others.

When we do this, are are rightly judging in accordance with God's word, in a similar way that we should rightly divide God's word.

Timothy, as the worker that Paul is exhorting him to be, has the responsibility to rightly divide the word of truth. His teaching, communication, and interpretation of it should be accurate and true. This is the responsibility for any pastor and teacher.

Though perfection in this area is impossible, and would be an unfair expectation to have, we still in all our ability must work hard at it.

3. The Wrong Worker - 2:16-18

(SLIDE 31) 2 Timothy 2:16-18 - "But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. 17 And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, 18 who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some."

IDLE BABBLINGS

Timothy is told to "shun profane and idle babblings". Teachings that are irreverent, evil, useless, and false, the command by Paul is to quite literally avoid.

(SLIDE 32) Paul also gives us two harms these profane and idle babbling lead to:

1. Leads to ungodliness

"they will increase to more ungodliness." Paul literally states these babbling progress towards ungodliness.

I read a commentary that suggested these people could have regarded themselves as 'progressives' and that Paul picks up the verb from that. Ironically using it to state that their progress is in ungodliness.

2. Spreads like cancer

Galatians 5:9 tells us a - "A little leaven leavens the whole lump."

False doctrine can have damaging effects even in small amounts.

(SLIDE 33)

HYMENAEOUS & PHILETUS

If you know Paul, you know that he is not one to tip toe around the subject, we see him name drop these idle babblers here saying "Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort"

It's likely this is the same Hymenaeus from 1 Timothy 1:20 which Paul speaks of Hymenaeus and another man by the name of Alexander who Paul writes "whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme."

Hymenaeus, the usual suspect in Paul's epistles to Timothy.

He's basically the recurring villain of the Timothy letters.

You get to 2 Timothy and Paul says, 'Oh yeah—and Hymenaeus is doing it again.'

Us readers are like "Hymenaeus is back! I thought Paul delivered Him to Satan back in Season 1!" (1 Timothy).

THE HERESY

The fault of Hymenaeus and Philetus is they have “**strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past**”

Likely believing in a spiritual resurrection and not a bodily one to come, they held and taught the view that the resurrection of the believer happens once they receive Christ.

The study strongly suggests this heresy to be a form of gnosticism, and the damage has already been done.

They spiritualized the resurrection and scoffed at the idea of a literal bodily raising of from the grave for the saints in Christ.

You may wonder, what’s the big deal? Why does this issue matter so much to Paul?

(SLIDE 34) Hamilton explains the damaging effect this particular heresy can have on the church:

“If the resurrection is past already, it is evident that the saints have reached their final condition while yet on earth, with the result that the church ceases to look for the coming of the Lord, loses the truth of its heavenly destiny, and gives up its stranger and pilgrim character. Having lost its heavenly character, the church settles down on the earth, taking a place as part of the system for the reformation and government of the world.”

OVERTHROW THE FAITH

“**they overthrow the faith of some.**”

Because these men have swerved away from truth, and have not rightly divided it, they have led others away from their faith in Christ.

This is the heart of Paul’s warning to Timothy.

Here’s the good news: The unfaithful actions of some do not compromise the solid foundation of God. as we now look at “**The Reward of a Worker**”

4. The Reward of a Worker - 2:19

(SLIDE 35) 2 Timothy 2:19 - “**Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”** Despite all this negative ministry experience Paul preaches “**Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands**”

FOUNDATION STANDS

Before this verse, Paul shares about the severe attack he has been under against deception and wickedness, leaders preaching blasphemy causing the the faith of some to be overthrown, but despite all that, he reminds Timothy (and himself) that the solid foundation that God has laid for His kingdom cannot be shaken.

His truth still stands firm.

Nothing will ever bring it to destruction as [Isaiah 40:8](#) says: (SLIDE 36)

“**The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.**”

Take hope that God’s word stands firmly in the future, it is eternal.

This is a great example that Paul gives despite the turmoil one may face in Ministry, there should be a peace in the midst of all that knowing that God is ultimately in control and His plan will be accomplished.

THE LORD KNOWS

Paul then talks about a seal this foundation of God has, and those who are founded in the Lord would also share in. This seal has two inscriptions:

One is in regards to God, the other is in regards to us.

A Divine side and a Human side, if you will.

“The Lord knows those who are His,”

God differentiates between those who simply profess faith in Jesus, and those who actually have a real relationship with Him.

Between the Faithful and the faithless God cannot be fooled, He knows those who are His.

DEPART FROM INIQUITY

“Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity”

This is the human side of the seal.

Professing Christians can prove the reality of their profession through lives of holiness and godliness.

Only God can see the heart, but the fruitful result of a person who is truly in Christ will be an outflow of godliness, in that they have turned away from wickedness and iniquity.

God elects His people. Seal #1

God Sanctifies His people. Seal #2

(SLIDE 37)

“As Paul thinks of Hymenaeus and Philetus and their false teaching, he realizes afresh that dark days are coming upon the church. Unbelievers have been accepted into the local church. Spiritual life is at such a low ebb that it is often hard to tell true Christians from mere professors. Christendom is a mixed multitude, and the resulting confusion is devastating.”

- MacDonald

CONCLUSION

The focus of today's passage is for us to strive to be “Unashamed Workers” as Paul exhorts Timothy to be.

An unashamed worker of God, who has nothing to be ashamed of because they are solely devoted to doing His will.

When we serve our own wills, the results can be shame on our part before God.

This should be something that we would all agree on and want to become as Christians, but how many of us today when looking at our lives and faith can actually say “I am an Unashamed Worker.”

I find that so often when I'm preaching a sermon my exhortation usually comes down to the simple truth that “we all need to grow in the Lord by devoting ourselves to Him.”

That's why we're all here. Gathering together as the Church can be a way for us to grow in the Lord, but it cannot be the only thing we rely on for us to grow.

I'll admit that when I preach about growth in your Christian Life, I feel I should do a better job at explaining how we accomplish this.

The Christian life is supposed to be defined by growth in our relationship to Jesus.

Of course none of us are perfect and we have a ways to go until we reach glory, but whether it be our bad habits, our sin struggles, our lack of discipline or whatever exists in our life that is shameful to God, Jesus is Greater and wants to see us grow beyond those things.

The process of growth is not trying harder, and focusing more on the areas of struggle, but simply submitting to Jesus more and more in each and every aspect of your life.

The beautiful thing is that when we begin to do this, He does His work in our hearts to shape us into Himself.

In verse 19, the last verse we looked at we have a blueprint for an examination with can put ourselves and

"The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

God knows who are His → therefore we belong to Him → therefore we depart from iniquity → therefore we can serve Him without shame.

CONCLUSION

The focus of today's passage is for us to strive to be "Unashamed Workers."

Paul tells Timothy to be a worker who does not need to be ashamed because he has been diligent to present himself approved to God, faithfully handling the Word of truth.

And I think that's a question worth asking ourselves:

If God examined my life, what kind of worker would He find?

Not, "How do I look to everyone else?"

Not, "Do people think I'm a good Christian?"

Not, "Do I know enough Bible verses?"

But, "Am I faithfully living for Jesus?"

Because ultimately, we're not working for the approval of people.
We're working for the Lord.

And here's where I love where Paul ends this passage.

After talking about false teachers, deception, people falling away, and the faith of some being overthrown, Paul says:

"Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands."

Everything around us can shake.

People can fail.
Churches can struggle.
Teachers can get it wrong.
Christians can disappoint us.
Even we can look at our own lives and see areas where we've failed.

Nevertheless—the foundation of God stands.

And then Paul gives us the two sides of that foundation:

“The Lord knows those who are His.”

That's the first thing.

Before Paul tells us what we need to do, he reminds us of what God has already done.

The Lord knows those who are His.

If you belong to Jesus, your identity isn't ultimately found in how well you performed this week.
Your identity is found in Christ.

The Lord knows those who are His.

But then Paul gives us the other side:

“Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

In other words, if we belong to Jesus, that should actually change the way we live.

Grace isn't permission to remain where Jesus found us.

The Gospel doesn't just forgive us—it transforms us.

Maybe you're sitting here thinking, “there are things in my life that need to change.”

Maybe it's a sin you've been tolerating.

Maybe it's a habit you keep returning to.

Maybe it's bitterness.

Maybe it's pride.

Maybe it's a lack of discipline.

Maybe you've been spending more time consuming the things of this world than being shaped by the Word of God.

Whatever it is, thinking, “I just need to try harder.” isn't likely to get you the success you need.

The Christian life isn't about gritting your teeth and becoming a better version of yourself.

It's about surrendering more and more of yourself to Jesus.

The more we know Him, the more we trust Him.

The more we trust Him, the more we obey Him.

The more we obey Him, the more He transforms us.

And the more He transforms us, the more our lives begin to look like the One we belong to.

So the goal isn't perfection.

The goal is faithfulness.

Because one day, our work will be examined.

And when that day comes, I hope what is inscribed into our work isn't the vain things that may describe us like:

"He was impressive."

Or,

"He was popular."

Or,

"He was really talented."

But instead how about:

"He was faithful."

That's something to strive for here and now.

Handled the Word of God carefully.

Loved Jesus genuinely.

Served people faithfully.

When he failed, he came back to Christ.

A life lived as an unashamed worker of God.

Church, that can be our prayer.

"Lord, make me a worker who doesn't need to be ashamed."

Not because I've never failed.

But because I belong to the One who never fails.

"The Lord knows those who are His."

Are you his? Have you submitted yourself to the Lord, put your faith in Him and committed your life to Him?

His work to save you from yourself is complete, and He is ready to receive you into a relationship with Him.

Turn from your iniquity, confess Him as Lord, and put your faith in Him.

If you have chosen to do that today, you will find belonging like you have never experienced before because you are His and He knows you.

So let us live like people who belong to Him.

Let us depart from iniquity.

Let us handle His Word faithfully.

Let us serve Him diligently.

And when our work is finally examined, may we hear those words we all long to hear:

"Well done, good and faithful servant."