

Introduction: To fully understand today's passage we need to know its context. So look up in your Bibles to the two paragraphs which precede our passage. (*Verses 1-9*) These describe people who are lovers of themselves, lovers of money (silver coins), proud, ungrateful, unholy, and having a form of godliness but denying its power. *** This sixth and last description is the key. What is the power of godliness? Anyone, 'off the top of your head'? It is Christ crucified on a Roman Cross! (*1 Corinthians 1:18-25*) But it is impossible for humans to take up and embrace The Cross of Jesus as their own cross without God's help which comes from humble submission to Him IN The Messiah Savior. Jesus said the one who would come after Him 'Must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me'. (*Mark 8:34-38; Matthew 10:37-39; 16:21-28; Luke 9:22-27; 14:25-27*) But lovers of themselves are too proud (*verses 1-9*) to humbly submit themselves to God. (*Philippians 2:1-16*) *** All that is happening in our country now illustrates that the overwhelming majority of Americans do not know God rightly, and they have NO desire to take up their cross and follow Jesus in His sacrificial love for all people from conception to natural death. *** Human nature only changes when people are submitted to God at His prompting to receive new birth IN The Holy Spirit. (*Hebrews 12:1-11*) This is when God brings our dead spirits to life at the moment we surrender our lives to Him IN His Son. Now, let us look more closely at the role of suffering and persecution in the life of godly people.

I. You followed my life in persecutions from which The Lord delivered me; but, all desiring godliness IN Christ will be persecuted, and evil will be worse. (*Verses 10-13*)

A. But you followed my teaching, life and character in persecutions, and out of them The Lord delivered me. (*Verses 10-11*)

1. But thou followed me. (*Verse 10a*)

But thou: Paul uses this phrase four times with Timothy to start a new paragraph – twice here!

Followed: The word is literally 'followed beside'. Jesus trained The Twelve by being with them constantly for some three years. Paul did the same with Timothy. (*Romans 16:21; 1 Corinthians 4:17; Philippians 1:1; 1 & 2 Thessalonians 1:1*)

i. The teaching, the way of living, the purpose. (*Verse 10b*)

Mind, action, heart: Teaching of doctrine impacted Timothy's mind. How Paul acted in life was a model for Timothy. And Paul gave his whole heart to fulfilling God's purpose for him.

ii. The faith, the patience, the love. (*Verse 10c*)

Heart, will, heart: Faith comes from the heart (*Romans 10:9-10*), and patience is an act of the will.

iii. The perseverance, the persecutions, the sufferings. (*Verse 10d-11a*)

Will, body, heart: Perseverance is also an act of the will, while the many persecutions Paul experienced affected his body, and the sufferings in many places affected his heart.

2. Such as happened to me in Antioch, in Iconium, in Lystra. (*Verse 11b*)

Acts: These cities were located in what is now central Turkey with only 100 miles from Antioch the westernmost city to Lystra. In Antioch, after Paul preached, many non-Jews had faith to life, but the Jews stirred up persecution to drive Paul and Barnabas out of town (*Acts 13:14-52*). In Iconium Jews and non-Jews came to faith, but again civic leaders planned to stone them, so they left (*Acts 14:1-5*). Finally, in Timothy's home town (*Acts 16:1-3*) while Paul preached a crippled man was miraculously healed and some Jews who followed him from Antioch and Iconium stoned him, but he preached one more time before moving on (*Acts 14:6-20*). So, even before meeting Paul, Timothy would have heard of all that happened to him.

3. What persecutions I endured. (*Verse 11c*)

Persecutions: To sum up everything to this point, Timothy personally knew over a dozen things about his Gospel teacher: his character, heart, mind, desires, actions, and response to persecution and suffering. The same should be true of us.

We do not know the author of a book or a teacher on TV. But we do know our teachers in a local church. It is important to be shown and taught The Gospel by people we know by having lived with them.

4. And out of them all, The Lord delivered me. (*Verse 11d*)

Deliverance: This word is always used for a work of God. In another letter Paul describes all the harrowing circumstances from which he had been rescued by God. (*2 Corinthians 11:23-33*) At the end of this letter he says The Lord will deliver him safely into His heavenly Kingdom. (*4:16-18*)

B. Indeed, all desiring to live godly IN Christ Jesus will be persecuted, but evil men will get much worse. (*Verses 12-13*)

1. But indeed all who desire to live godly IN Christ Jesus will be persecuted. (*Verse 12*)

Difficult truth: All who follow Jesus are in a spiritual battle in which Satan is active. He wants to regain control of the lives of people who have experienced new life IN The Savior. He will afflict God's people. One of many reasons to love God is that He does not hold back Truth from His followers – even if it can cause distress!

Desire to live for God: We know we have crossed over from death to life when our every desire is to please God by becoming more like His Son in the power of His Word and The Holy Spirit.

IN Messiah Savior: The only place followers of The Messiah can overcome the persecution directed at those who want to please God in obedient faith is hiding IN The Person of The Savior King.

Godly people will be persecuted

2. But evil men proceed to the worst. (*Verse 13a*)

Sin destructive: Another sobering truth is that it is impossible for people to 'dabble' in evil. Know that Satan seeks to lead us downward into sin, evil and wickedness!

3. Leading (others) astray and being led astray. (*Verse 13b*)

Goal of persecutors: People who had NOT put Jesus first in all of their life were trying to cause Christians to stumble and fall from grace and salvation.

Trapped: However, in a tragic irony, people who are trying to lead others astray are themselves being led hopelessly astray by Satan. So when we are persecuted, let us pray for our persecutors!

Godly people will be persecuted

II. Continue in what you have learned, and the sacred writings which give wisdom to salvation; all Scripture is God-breathed and useful for teaching what is good. (Verses 14-17)

- A. But you continue in what you have learned, knowing your teachers and the sacred writings which give you wisdom to salvation IN Christ. (Verses 14-15)
1. But thou continue in what things thou have learned and have been confirmed to thee. (Verse 14a)
But thou: In this second paragraph Timothy is commanded to continue ('abide' – John 15) in what he has learned from Paul by observing his faithful obedient service to Jesus and His Gospel.
Confirmed: All this has been confirmed to Timothy by The Holy Spirit.
 2. Having known from whom you have learned. (Verse 14b)
Mother and grandmother: In addition to what he learned from Paul, Timothy also learned from his mother Eunice ('good victory') and grandmother Lois ('agreeable' – 1:5).
 3. And that from childhood you have known the sacred writings. (Verse 15a)
Child: The rabbis taught parents to start teaching their sons from the Torah, Prophets and Writings at five years old.
Sacred writings: The sacred writings surely are what we call the Old Testament; but, they may also include the developing written and oral tradition about Jesus and how He fulfilled Scripture. Peter said this about Paul's letters in his last letter. (2 Peter 3:15-16)
Have known: Timothy came to know from: the sacred writings, observation of godly mentors, and his own experience working alongside his mentors.
 4. These writings are able to give thee wisdom into salvation. (Verse 15b)
Wisdom: Wisdom correctly applies all of God's Word (sacred writings) to every aspect of our life – every day of our life.
Salvation: Salvation is for all of life, including the nine areas of life Paul covered in the first sentence.
 5. Through the faith (that is) IN Christ Jesus. (Verse 15c)
Faith IN Messiah Savior: The only object of faith for both wisdom and salvation is Messiah Jesus. We found in the first part the only One in whom we can overcome persecution, because we desire God to always be first, is The Messiah Savior.

Godly people will be persecuted

- B. All Scripture is God-breathed for teaching (doctrine) and righteous deeds SO people may be equipped to every good work. (Verses 16-17)
1. All Scripture (is) God-breathed and useful to teaching (instruction). (Verses 16a)
Inspiration: 'God-breathed' means God inspired the human writers of Scripture. (2 Peter 1:20-21) May we fully accept that all of The Bible is inspired by The Holy Spirit so we should know it, meditate on it, and act on it AS the fully trustworthy standard to know, love and live for God.
Useful to teaching: The meaning of 'useful' includes profitable and beneficial. So, when all of Scripture is taught to God's people it benefits them in that they can use it in living their lives.
 2. To refute error. (Verse 16b)
Refute error: With wicked and evil men acting with Satan to lead people astray, it is good that all Scripture can reprove false teaching that The Cross is unnecessary; and its corollary that Christians do not need to take up their cross.
 3. To correct faults. (Verse 16c)
Correct faults: Everyone has flaws and faults that are displeasing to God. Scripture can correct these.
 4. To train in the righteousness. (Verse 16d)
Train in righteousness: Scripture can train God's people into the righteousness of Christ that God requires of people He created in His image. (2 Corinthians 5:16-21; compare 1 Timothy 4:1-8)
Series: Putting it together, the inspired instruction in Scripture trains people into the righteousness of God by making them aware of their faults and correcting their faults.
 5. So that the man of God may be equipped, to every good work having been equipped. (Verse 17)
Word play: God gives His people all they need in the new birth in terms of 'equipment' to do every good work (because) they have been equipped (by Him). The very action God does in His people gives them what they need to do His good works on this earth as His children and citizens in His Kingdom.

Bottom Line: Let us commit to live as God's people, empowered and enabled to do what is humanly impossible, namely to take up our cross and suffer persecution with Jesus while doing every good work because of what we have learned of Him from Spirit-inspired Scripture.

The Word and Spirit equip people to do every good work

Conclusion: Timothy has been through persecutions with Paul, and has observed and known his godly life IN Messiah Savior in persecutions and sufferings. Therefore, he will continue in what he has learned from Paul AND has had confirmed by The Holy Spirit in the sacred writings. And for all people, Scripture is inspired by God to teach, point out and correct error, and train in righteousness SO God's people may be equipped for every good work even in persecution when it comes.

Godly people will be persecuted