

Series: Finding Truth

Sermon: Truth is Direction

Date: 12-13-20

Sermon Text: 2 Timothy 3:14 - 4:5

Sermon Presenter: Pastor Larry

Sermon Summary

This message looks at Paul's advice to his young apprentice Timothy concerning God's Word! God's truth brings direction to a person's life and ministry if they will follow it! In order to follow God's truth a person must first know the truth, then believe the truth, and finally let the truth of God's salvation save them through Jesus! God is the source of truth and His truth is extremely practical! Paul gives six practical applications for living our lives and then gives 5 applications for ministry!

Full Sermon Notes

Introduction:

"By His blood and in His Name, in His freedom I am free. For the love of Jesus Christ Who has resurrected me!" Because of the loving sacrifice of Jesus, we are free from the chains of sin and are now able to live a new life. In fact we have been resurrected in Christ to live a new life! But where do we find direction for that new life? We find that direction in God's Holy Word which is God's revealed truth to humankind! However, there are some things we must understand if we are to find direction from God's truth? Let's pray and ask God to reveal to us these very important things to know! Pray!

There were 128 runners in the field for the cross country race at the 1993 NCAA Division II Track and Field Championships. As they set out on the 6.2 mile run, they were following a course that had been marked for them by the race officials. Toward the end of the course, one of the runners in the middle of the group realized something was wrong. Mike Delcavo of Western State College in Colorado saw that the main pack had missed the turn. "I was waving for them to follow me and yelling 'This is the right way,'" he told an interviewer after the race.

Delcavo was right—but only four other runners followed him. The rest continued on the shortcut, which allowed them to run a shorter distance and finish the race sooner. In a widely-criticized decision, race officials allowed the abbreviated route to stand as the "official course" and Delcavo officially finished 123rd. (Source - Ministry 127 website)

Sometimes the world will just simply rewrite the rules to fit what they want, regardless of the truth! The world does not always reward staying on track! But the path we follow spiritually is important to God and the direction God's truth brings into our lives matters in this life and in eternity! Getting off God's course has consequences and we can't rewrite the rule book! Thank God there are some things that are not constantly changing, like the laws of physics, and God's spiritual laws! Just think if one day the law of gravity worked and the next day it didn't! That would be a disaster! The same thing is true of spiritual laws, if they were constantly changing, there would be moral and spiritual disaster! But everyone wants those to change with the times, with the fads, with the latest popular trends. I'm so grateful...

Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever.

The main character on the new Star Wars show, The Mandalorian, will many times say... "This is the way!" He's speaking of a code of behavior they have. Another character, an old guy, when he wants you to know he is serious about something, as he walks away, he says, "I have spoken!" I love what Jesus said about the things he taught...

Matthew 24:35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

With that in mind, we are going to look at 9 verses from Paul's second letter to his young apprentice in the ministry, Timothy. Paul's advice to Timothy shows us the things we must understand, if we are to find direction from God's truth! First...

We must understand God's Truth gives direction only if we follow it!

2 Timothy 3:14-15

a. To follow God's Truth you've got to know it!

Paul told Timothy...

2 Timothy 3:14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned

Learning the truth only comes to those who are willing to learn the truth! In order to know truth a person must be teachable! They must be good listeners and willing to study. Okay, men, I know how you feel about directions, but trust me, when it comes to God's directions, for life you desperately need to read the instructions! God's Word is His manual for life! How many people have Bibles but never read them? We used to have a puppet ministry. We did a skit with the puppets on this very topic. I wish so much I still had that cassette tape. Here's some of the things the puppets would say,

Having a Bible and not reading it daily is like: Having a dishwasher but letting your German Shepherd lick your dishes clean. That's really dumb!

Having a Bible and not reading it daily is like: Having a ski boat but trying to train your goldfish to pull you on water skis! That's really dumb!

Having a Bible and not reading it daily is like: Having a Ferrarie parked in the garage but walking everywhere you go! That's really dumb!

Let me modernize it a little bit:

Having a Bible and not reading it daily is like: Having a pair of Beats headphones, but always listening to music on your phone's little speakers! That's really dumb!

The writer of Proverbs put it this way...

Proverbs 1:5 let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance—
Proverbs 1:6 for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise.

Proverbs 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

God's Truth gives you direction if you follow it, but...

b. To follow God's truth you've also got to believe it!

2 Timothy 3:14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it,

At some point you've got to decide what you're going to believe about life, about eternity, about God, about spiritual truth! Of course it always helps if those who taught you about Jesus had character, integrity, truthfulness, and a lifestyle that backed up their teachings! Timothy had such an example:

2 Timothy 1:5 I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.

But here's the bottom line: you don't get to heaven based on your grandmother's faith. It has to become your faith! The faith that lives or lived in those who have taught you God's truth, must become your own! In fact the Bible says this:

Hebrews 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Without faith it is impossible to please God! Why? Because the ability to have faith is a gift from God that enables those who are willing to exercise that faith to have a relationship with God!! Faith is the portal through which we enter into a relationship with God Almighty, but you must exercise that faith by believing God's truth! God's Truth gives you direction if you follow it, but...

c. To follow God's truth you've got to let it save you!

Paul told Timothy...

2 Timothy 3:15 and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Jewish people would start teaching their children the law at age 5. Those who had decided to follow Christ evidently continued this early education!

James put it this way...

James 1:21 Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent, and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

You might say, “but I thought Jesus saves us!” You’re right! Listen to what Paul had already said in this letter...

2 Timothy 1:8 So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner.

But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God,

2 Timothy 1:9 who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time,

2 Timothy 1:10 but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

In other words, God’s truth can guide us to salvation if we are willing to repent of our sins, humble ourselves before the Lord and accept the good news of Jesus Christ! This good news is sown in our hearts when we hear the message of what Jesus did on the cross in order to save us! When you place your faith in what He did for you as payment for your sins that good news produces a harvest and you are saved! So if we follow God’s truth it will direct us to find salvation for our soul and our life! The second thing we must understand, if we are to find direction from God’s truth, is this:

We must understand God’s Truth gives us direction because it is Divine!

2 Timothy 3:16a

a. God is the source of truth!

2 Timothy 3:16a All Scripture is God-breathed...

The Psalmist said this...

Psalms 119:160 All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal.

Psalms 1:1 Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers,

Psalms 1:2 but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night.

So many people today do not want to believe in absolute spiritual truth, but would rather make up their own truth or say that anything goes! When there is no external, objective, higher than us, divine and Godly truth, we lose foundation, footing, stability, and the moral authority to enforce any kind of moral or ethical code. What happens then is this: whoever is in power gets to enforce what they think is right regardless of whether it’s right or not! We’ve seen this happen in earthly governments throughout history! America has never been a theocracy, rule by God, but a democracy, rule by the people. However, for many years we were able to function because there was consensus on the Judao-Christian ethic. Without that, there will be a

constant battle of human opinions and whoever is in power will enforce their opinion. But for you and me, we know that God's truth gives us direction because it is divine and also because...

b. God's truth is practical!

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful

When you look at the Ten Commandments we immediately see that they were extremely practical for human life and society. Four had to do with our relationship with God and six had to do with our relationship with others. Things like do not murder, do not steal, do not lie, honor your Father and Mother, do not covet your neighbors property, do not commit adultery. The Psalmist weighed in on this powerfully...

Psalm 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

Psalm 19:8 The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.

Psalm 19:9 The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The decrees of the LORD are firm, and all of them are righteous.

Wow! So practical and so powerful! Are you ready for some practical application? We find practical when Paul gives us the third thing we must understand, if we are to find direction from God's truth...

We must understand God's Truth gives us direction for living!

2 Timothy 3:16b-17

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

2 Timothy 3:17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

There's six things here that give us direction for living and I'm going to let God's Word tell us about each one!

a. It teaches us

And listen to the teaching Paul had already given to Timothy in this letter...

2 Timothy 2:22 Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

2 Timothy 2:23 Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels.

2 Timothy 2:24 And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.

2 Timothy 2:25 Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth,
2 Timothy 2:26 and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

b. It rebukes us

Listen to these words in Hebrews 12:5-7

Hebrews 12:5 And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says, "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you,

Hebrews 12:6 because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son."

Hebrews 12:7 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father?

When God's Word rebukes us it is because God is trying to move us away from the sin that is trying to destroy us. As the song says, He's a good, good Father!

c. It corrects us

Proverbs 15:32 Those who disregard discipline despise themselves, but the one who heeds correction gains understanding.

Proverbs 15:33 Wisdom's instruction is to fear the LORD, and humility comes before honor.

Let me share something with you! When God corrects us, He is doing us a great favor! He corrects us when we are headed in the wrong direction! God wants us to stay on the right path so we end up where we're supposed to be. Sailors know that if they are off by only 5 degrees in a certain direction that's not a big problem for a little while, but they know if they continue that way for a long time it will greatly alter their destination, where they end up. It has been said that direction not intention leads to your destination! Not that intention doesn't matter, it does, because if you don't intend to follow Jesus you won't, but if you intend to, but don't take steps in the right direction, you will end up not following Jesus or being where He wants you to be! Kids it's like Piñata when they blind fold you and spin you around and then you try to hit the Piñata but you really have no direction. You could end up wacking somebody instead of the Piñata filled with candy. In life it's not a game and you need God's direction or somebody's gonna get hurt! So God's truth not only corrects us and keeps us on course...

d. It encourages us

Romans 15:4 For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.

Romans 15:5 May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had,
Romans 15:6 so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I can't tell you how many times God's Word has brought me encouragement in my life. I have a friend who sends me a Scripture verse everyday and so many times it's been just what I needed or what someone I was talking to on the phone needed, so I just forward the verse to them! Very encouraging! Another thing God's truth does is...

e. It trains us

1 Timothy 4:7 Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly.

1 Timothy 4:8 For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.

1 Timothy 4:9 This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance.

God's truth is our personal trainer when it comes to getting direction for our daily spiritual workout. And let me just say this, I know there's different opinions when it comes to physical workouts. Some say everyday, some say every other day, some say cardio one day then strength conditioning the next! But when it comes to our spiritual training, the truth is we should never miss a single day of at least some spiritual training! Speaking of the wisdom of God, the writer of Proverbs writes...

Proverbs 8:1 Does not wisdom call out? Does not understanding raise her voice?

And then down in verse 33-35...

Proverbs 8:33 Listen to my instruction and be wise; do not ignore it.

Proverbs 8:34 Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway.

Proverbs 8:35 For whoever finds me finds life and receives favour from the LORD.

f. It equips us

Hebrews 13:20 Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep,

Hebrews 13:21 equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

I'm here to tell you that God will not lead you to go somewhere or to do something without equipping you along the way and once you get to the job! God's equipment is the best and is designed to get the job done! Check this out! Paul told the Christians at Ephesus...

Ephesians 1:16 I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.
Ephesians 1:17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.
Ephesians 1:18 I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,
Ephesians 1:19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength,

What a list of equipment: prayers, the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, enlightenment, hope, the riches of His glorious inheritance, and His incomparably great power, and the working of His mighty strength! That's a spiritual Snap On Tool box right there! High quality equipment!

Paul then gives us a fourth thing we must understand, if we are to find direction from God's truth, which is this:

We must understand God's Truth gives us direction for our ministry!!

2 Timothy 4:1-4

Paul told young Timothy...

- a. This direction comes from God

2 Timothy 4:1 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge:

Our ministry must originate from our divine calling! We are not divine, but the calling on our lives to be missionaries, ambassadors, and representatives of God to the world, must flow from a divine call! And the things we say and do must be founded upon the truth of God's Word, His direction, His anointing, His wisdom, His timing, and with His attitude. Only then will we be able to effectively preach the Word.

- b. This direction in ministry comes with instructions

2 Timothy 4:2 Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.

1. The content of our ministry - Preach the Word not your opinion!

Paul had previously told the church at Corinth this...

1 Corinthians 2:1 ...When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God.

1 Corinthians 2:2 For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

1 Corinthians 2:3 I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling.

1 Corinthians 2:4 My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power,

1 Corinthians 2:5 so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.

2. The preparedness of our ministry - Being unprepared is not an option!

In season and out of season! The Apostle Peter put it this way...

1 Peter 3:15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

1 Peter 3:16 keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

3. The responsibility of our ministry - The responsibility cannot be overstated!

We are responsible for correcting, rebuking and encouraging! There are people who love the encouraging part of this, but are not so willing to do the correcting and rebuking part, because that's not popular! And then there are those who never encourage, but love to correct and rebuke! Erring on either side of this equation is not healthy. And when we do have to correct and rebuke someone for their good and for the good of the church, we must remember...

4. The attitude of our ministry - Our attitude should never be offensive!

2 Timothy 4:2 ...—with great patience and careful instruction.

And Peter put it this way...

1 Peter 3:15 ...But do this with gentleness and respect,

1 Peter 3:16 keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

5. The importance of our ministry - This importance should never be underestimated!

2 Timothy 4:3 For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.

2 Timothy 4:4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

So it's mission critical that we have direction from God for our ministry because the world is lost and needs the direction we can give. Is there anything else we should understand about finding

direction from God's truth? Yes! Two things to wrap up, but important things I dare not leave out. Paul lets us know...

We must understand God's Truth gives us direction in hard times!

2 Timothy 4:5a

Paul tells Timothy this...

2 Timothy 4:5 But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship...

No matter what you're going through God's truth will get you through because the truth is...

Hebrews 13:5 ...“Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”

Hebrews 13:6 So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?”

And finally...

We must understand God's Truth gives us direction that will bring us success in completing our task!

2 Timothy 4:5b

Paul told Timothy to...

2 Timothy 4:5 ...do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

Anyone in here who enjoys successfully completing a task, getting a job done, finishing well? Me too! Paul wanted this so badly and he stated it this way...

Acts 20:24 However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.

Folks we should desire to testify to the gospel of God's grace. Our love for others and deep concern for their salvation should not be “conceal carry”, but should be carried openly and lovingly for others to see! If we understand God's truth it will give us direction to successfully complete our task and discharge all the duties of our ministry. Let me end with this song I wrote early on in my ministry.

Lord please grant me your sweet peace if i'm ever to succeed, but not success in the worlds eyes, but as one who really tries, to be all that you want me to be, to do all that you have me to do, to be willing to go anywhere that you would have me go!

And Lord please grant me your great strength if I'm ever to complete the awesome task that you've have placed at my feet,

Help me be all that you want me to be, and help me do all that you have me to do, and make me willing to go anywhere that you would have me go!

Never let me me be ashamed, for the gospel brings salvation, I'll gladly share your lovely name to every race and every nation, every nation;

And Lord please feel my mouth with your praise as to you my hands I raise, but not with pride or vanity but with a heart of sincerity

Help me be all that you want me to be, and help me do all that you'd have me to do, and make me willing to go anywhere that you would have me to go, awe that you would have me to go, Lord I'll go where you want me to go!

Pray!