

**BEING A VESSEL UNTO HONOR, A FULLY EQUIPPED MAN OF GOD,
BY BEING EMPOWERED IN THE GRACE WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS
TO FULLY ACCOMPLISH OUR MINISTRY
IN THE UNIQUE MINISTRY OF GOD'S ECONOMY**

(Friday—Evening Session)

Message Three

**Being Empowered in the Grace Which Is in Christ Jesus
to Be Teachers, Soldiers, Contenders, Farmers, and Workmen**

Scripture Reading: 2 Tim. 2:1-7, 15

- I. Even during a period of decline, a downward trend when most of God's people are carried away, we need to be among the remnant of God's people, who receive mercy from the Lord to remain faithful to Him—1 Cor. 7:25b; 1 Kings 19:14, 18; Rom. 11:5; Ezra 9:8; Neh. 1:3; Hag. 1:14:**
- A. Onesiphorus was an overcomer who resisted the general trend and stood against the downward current to refresh the Lord's ambassador in spirit, soul, and body, not being ashamed of the apostle's imprisonment on behalf of the Lord's commission—2 Tim. 1:16-18.
 - B. Timothy was one who was fully perfected and equipped to minister the word of God, not only in caring for a local church but also in confronting the worsening decline of the church; he was like-souled with the apostle Paul to genuinely care for the church with all the saints and remind them of Paul's ways which were in Christ—3:13-17; Phil. 2:19-22; 1 Cor. 4:17; 1 Tim. 1:16; 4:12.
 - C. Luke was the beloved physician, a faithful companion of Paul until his martyrdom—Col. 4:14; Philem. 24; 2 Tim. 4:11.
 - D. Titus walked in the same spirit and in the same steps as Paul to care for the churches—2 Cor. 7:6-7; 12:18; Titus 1:4-5; 3:12; cf. 2 Tim. 4:10.
 - E. Mark was useful to Paul for the ministry—v. 11; cf. Acts 15:37.
- II. Second Timothy reveals that in these last days before the Lord's coming, we need to be empowered in the grace which is in Christ Jesus to be faithful men, those who are teachers, soldiers, contenders, farmers, and workmen who cut straight the word of the truth—2:1-7, 15; Neh. 8:10; 2 Cor. 12:9:**
- A. If someone in a local church has a deposit of the Lord's healthy words, he should train the faithful ones that they too may have a good deposit from the Lord and be competent to teach others so that they may be good stewards, dispensers, of the varied grace of God—2 Tim. 2:2; 1:12-14; 1 Tim. 6:20; Eph. 3:2; 4:29; 1 Pet. 4:10:
 - 1. We must shepherd the saints with the teaching of God's economy—Eph. 4:11; Col. 1:27-29; cf. 1 Tim. 3:2; 4:11-16:
 - a. We should shepherd people by dispensing the divine life in the humanity of Jesus to cherish them and by teaching them the divine truths in the divinity of Christ to nourish them—Eph. 5:29.
 - b. Shepherding the flock of God by declaring to them all the counsel of God, the economy of God, protects the church from the destroyers of God's building, mingles them with the Triune God as grace, and binds them together in His oneness—Acts 20:26-30; Eph. 4:14; 1 Tim. 1:3-4; Rom. 16:17; cf. Ezek. 33:1-11; 34:25; Zech. 11:7.

2. The teacher, as a good minister of Christ Jesus, is nourished with the words of the faith and exercises his spirit to live Christ in his daily life for the church life—1 Tim. 4:6-7.
- B. Their serving the Lord as soldiers indicates that the apostle considered their ministry a warfare for Christ, just as the priestly service was considered a military service, a warfare—2 Tim. 2:3-4; Num. 4:23, 30, 35; 2 Tim. 4:7:
1. The Lord's ministry is the sounding of the trumpet for the army to go to war; to war the good warfare is to war against the different teachings of the dissenters and to carry out God's economy according to the apostles' ministry—1 Cor. 14:8; 1 Tim. 1:18; Num. 10:9; Judg. 7:18.
 2. To fight a good fight for the Lord's interests on this earth, we must clear away all earthly entanglements and lay hold on the eternal life, not trusting in our human life—2 Tim. 4:7; 1 Tim. 6:12; cf. 2 Cor. 5:4.
 3. We must be vigilant to fight the battle against death, the last enemy of God, by being filled with life to reign in life—Num. 6:6-7, 9; 2 Cor. 5:4; Rom. 5:17; 8:6, 11.
 4. Our will must be subdued and resurrected by Christ to be like the tower of David, the armory for spiritual warfare—S. S. 4:4; cf. 1 Chron. 11:22.
- C. We must run the Christian race as contenders, athletes, until we finish our course, fully accomplishing our ministry in the unique ministry of God's economy so that we may receive Christ as our prize—2 Tim. 2:5; 1 Cor. 9:25-27:
1. We must subdue our body and make it a conquered captive to serve us as a slave for fulfilling our holy purpose, not by our own effort but by the Spirit—Rom. 8:13.
 2. We must look to the Lord to be graced with His grace in Christ as the Beloved (Eph. 1:6) in order to finish our course so that we can be awarded in the next age with Christ as our incorruptible crown in the following aspects (1 Cor. 9:24-27):
 - a. He will be our crown of life—Rev. 2:10; James 1:12.
 - b. He will be our crown of righteousness—2 Tim. 4:6-8.
 - c. He will be our crown of holiness—Exo. 28:36-38; 29:6; cf. 1 Pet. 1:15-16; Eph. 5:26.
 - d. He will be our crown of glory—1 Pet. 5:4.
 - e. The very attributes of God that guarded the tree of life from fallen man are now being dispensed into us as we eat Christ as the tree of life for Him to become our righteousness, holiness, and glory in order for us to display Him as the multifarious wisdom of God to the whole universe—Rev. 2:7; Gen. 3:24; 1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 2:10; 3:10.
- D. The church is God's farm, God's cultivated land, and we are God's fellow workers, working as farmers together with Him by an all-fitting life to sow the seed of life into people and water them with the Spirit of life by His healthy words—2 Tim. 2:6; 1 Cor. 3:6, 9; 2 Cor. 6:1a; Luke 8:11; John 7:38; 6:63:
1. The word of God, as a grain of wheat, dispenses God as life into us to nourish us; it is also fire and a hammer to purify us and break down our self, our natural life, our flesh, our lusts, and our concepts—Jer. 23:28-29.
 2. God has sent forth His word as rain and snow to water His people in order to sanctify them, transform them, and conform them to His image that the Body may be built up—Isa. 55:8-11; John 17:17; Eph. 5:26.
 3. In our contact with the saints, we should have only one motive—to minister Christ to them that they may grow in the Lord—1 Tim. 5:1-2.
- E. To cut straight the word of the truth as God's workmen means to unfold the word of God in its various parts rightly and straightly without distortion (as in carpentry);

there is the need of the word of the truth, rightly unfolded, to enlighten the darkened people, inoculate against the poison, swallow up the death, and bring the distracted back to the proper track—2 Tim. 2:15; cf. Acts 26:18; Psa. 119:130.