Alright, good morning, and welcome to our 2nd service, which is our verse-by-verse study through the Bible. We are currently in the Book of 2 Timothy, and our text today is going to be Chapter 3:10-13, which is interesting, as I'll mention here in a moment.

For the benefit of those who weren't with us for the Prophecy Update or did not watch online, I want to quickly update you on the updates. Doubtless you know that last week's Prophecy Update titled "Decision Time" was censored and removed by YouTube, citing a violation of the terms of service with quote "Medical Misinformation."

This after the video had reached over 300,000 views by late Wednesday evening, so it was up four days. Surprisingly, I actually thought they might take it down sooner. But for those wishing to view that video, we have provided a link below today's Prophecy Update video, which is online, for those of you that are online, and it is available "uncensored" at JDFarag.org. Very exciting.

Actually, we received testimonies of no less than three people coming to Christ as a result of watching that video from last Sunday, and those were just the ones that we know about. Yeah, praise the Lord! So thankfully, we are still on YouTube.

However, after 12 years, well-nigh 2,000 teaching videos, and a quarter of a million subscribers, two more strikes, and we're out. They terminate the channel. It was for this very reason that, in anticipation of this, we sensed that the Lord would have us launch JDFarag.org last year.

Proverbs 22:3 says, "The prudent see evil ahead and take refuge, but the naive continue on and suffer the consequences." We saw this evil coming, and we did take refuge, we did take the needed steps so that we could hit the ground running with the website in order for it to be the "go-to" for all the Prophecy Updates and more.

Our plan is to develop this site in phases, and we're currently in Phase 1, and we very much appreciate your patience with us. Lord willing, we'll soon be implementing additional non-big-tech hosting resources that will support the live stream directly from our website at JDFarag.org, while at the same time remaining on YouTube and other platforms for a long as we can.

So, we're going to be; this is our posture: As shrewd as serpents and harmless as doves moving forward. We're neither surprised nor shaken by this. But we certainly, do again, covet your prayers for discernment as to how the Lord would have us to navigate through this.

Suffice it to say, it does seem that this is only the beginning of "Big Tech Giants" power, control, and censorship. Again, for the benefit of those who were not here for the update or did not watch online, I would encourage you to do so. We tackled that head-on, but God; big tech, infinitely bigger God. So, with that, I'll leave it at that.

But interesting our text today, 2 Timothy, Chapter 3:10-13. I'll invite you to turn there and join with me there if you're not there already, and those of you online as well. For those of you here, if you're able, I'll ask you to stand, and you can follow along as I read. If not, where you're seated is fine.

The Apostle Paul is writing to Timothy, warning Timothy really, and by the Holy Spirit in verse 10 says, "You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose: Faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions [verse 11] sufferings - what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra - the persecutions I endured.

Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. In fact [verse 12] everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted while evildoers [verse 13] and imposters will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived."

Let's pray; if you would please join with me and we'll ask God's blessing on our understanding. Lord, we readily admit this is an intense passage of Scripture that we have open before us this morning. It warrants our petition for the Holy Spirit to give us eyes of understanding so that we can see what it is that You desire to show to us in this passage that we have before us.

Lord, we need for the Holy Spirit to focus our attention so we can give You our undivided attention. Lord, we need the Holy Spirit to keep away any distraction, anything, any thought so that we don't miss anything that You have for us today, Your Word to us today.

Lord, we want to be amongst those who have ears to hear what the Spirit would say to us, Your church; we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen and Amen. You can be seated. Thank you.

I want to talk with you today about persecution. Actually, that's not true; I don't want to talk about this. But we need to talk about this, right? Specifically, as it relates to the Christian in these last days, which is really the context that Paul is writing to Timothy.

These are really Paul's last words to Timothy. He knows he has but a short time, his days are numbered, it's just a matter of time. So, these are his parting words to Timothy, whom he loves so much.

He knows he's not going to be there for Timothy; Timothy knows that he's not going to have the Apostle Paul very much longer so he's warning him, he's telling him, he's writing to him and preparing him for that which is being prepared for him - persecution.

Last week I sensed that, and I always seek the Lord concerning this as we go through the Bible verseby-verse. When we got to verse 9, I just thought, I'm not going to take and tackle verse 10 yet and now I know why. We just got to verse 9 last week, but beginning here in verse 10, Paul now talks about persecuting Christians and how that this is what is in store for the Christian.

This is not a popular teaching, right? Would you agree? Oh, yay! What's the Pastor going to talk about today? Persecution! Praise the Lord. I would argue that this is the clarion call concerning a targeted censoring, for lack of a better word, and persecution of Christians exactly as we were told it would be at the time of the end, and again, the Prophecy Update was just about that.

This is the end, and it's evidenced by this and oh by the way, spoiler alert: As Paul says here in our text and we'll talk about it in a moment, it's going to get worse. I don't want to hear that. I know you don't want to hear that. But it's going to not only go from bad to worse, it's already gone from bad to worse. Would you agree?

Enter the text before us today where the Apostle Paul explicitly warns Timothy about the persecution of those - now here's a qualifier: It's persecution of those who want to live godly lives in Christ Jesus. It's, again, a qualification. It's not just broadly, hey, you're a Christian; you're going to be persecuted, not necessarily.

I don't know if it's possible to overstate just how important and timely this is given what may, in fact, lie ahead for us as Christians in the days and weeks ahead. If you kindly allow me to, I'll expound on two truths.

I'll call them "life-changing truths." I hope I don't overuse that, but that's what they are. and they are truths that every single one of us must stand on if we're to have any hope of not being shaken to the core by what's coming: Persecution.

First one (#1), verses 10 and 11, and again, we talked about this in the Prophecy Update. I am keenly aware that this will come off as a firm grasp of the obvious, but I'm hoping you'll hear me out on this. "The Lord will deliver you."

Oh, I know, I know; I know; no, no, wait, wait. The Lord will! Let me take it a step further. I know this is improper English; please don't email me. He can't not. Is that a double negative, for those of you that are well-versed in that?

There's no way that God, consistent with who He is and how good He is, there is no way that God will not deliver you. He will deliver you! I know it doesn't seem like it. I know it doesn't feel like it, and it surely does not seem like it.

But here, Paul is reminding Timothy of his example, and he specifically refers to the way he lived his life. He was doctrinally sound despite all that happened to him, and you know what happened to him, right?

If you don't, you might want to check out his letters to the Corinthian Church. He's very detailed in writing about all that he went through: How many times he was shipwrecked, how many times he was beaten, how many times he was stone.

That word doesn't mean what it means today. I'm not talking about whoa, he got...no, it's not that. What a cruel way to kill someone, right? They'd take stones, and they'd throw them at you until you are dead. How's that one? How many times they did that to Paul?

Notice with me that in these verses, he lists nine godly characteristics that not only marked his life, the example of his life, but also, if you think about it, they were the very reasons that he was persecuted in his life. The reason why he was persecuted is because this is how he lived his life. Let's look at these real quick, just really fast.

He starts off with his teaching; some of your translations render it "his doctrine." What does that mean? Oh, he was sound. He was solid. The Word of God, sound doctrine, first and foremost- In fact, I would suggest that everything else would springboard from that. He was sound doctrinally, his teaching. He knew the Word of God and the God of the Word, and then everything else that follows.

All the other eight on this list are a result of that. His way of life. He lived it. Like James says, he wasn't "just a hearer," or even a preacher and teacher of God's Word. He was a doer; he did it for real.

He lived by the Word of God and that's the 2nd one on the list. The 3rd one -his purpose. The 4th one his faith. Of course, his faith because is that not how faith comes? Faith comes by hearing and hearing the Word of God. His patience, his love, and then it kind of turns a corner here a little bit.

I'm good so far. Are you? I'm good with this. Sound doctrine? Yeah! Praise the Lord. Preach it, brother! His way of life? Yeah! Preach it that preaches! His purpose? Yeah! His faith? Yeah, faith!

His patience? Not so fast. His love? Not so much. His endurance? Uh-oh. Then we get to his persecution and then his suffering.

Wait a minute, Pastor, I didn't sign up for that. Oh, yes, you did. You know those - speaking of terms of service - do you read those? Or do you just click, Agree?" Now they make you check the box, so there's no mistaking that you agree with the terms. It's very, you know, thorough.

But have you ever read them? You need about a week to read some of those terms of the service. Do you know what you're agreeing to when you, you know, sign up? It's not good, and it's getting worse.

Basically, you're agreeing to let them take all of your data, and give it, sell it. You do know you're the product, right? You know that? You're not the consumer or the customer. No, you're the product. So have a nice afternoon. They take your product, your data, and they sell it. That's the terms of the agreement. That's what you're signing up for.

Now, why do I use that illustration? Because sadly, many a Christian will make a profession of faith without understanding the terms, counting the cost. You'll forgive me for referring to it this way, knowing what you're signing up for. I don't fault the well-intentioned, would-be Christian. God knows her heart.

But I do fault any fellow pastor who, like myself and I'm not above it, will paint this beautiful, magnificent picture on the canvas of evangelism. Come to Christ, and all your problems will go away. Are you kidding me? They have only just begun. No, I mean it!

I don't know why I'm waxing nostalgic today, but I was thinking about that song, "Oh, Happy Day," yeah! "Oh, Happy Day," and it is! Because Jesus took and washed my sins away, oh, happy day! Enjoy it now! No, I'm serious because here's what's going to happen.

Here's the terms of service. This is what you're signing up for and agreeing to persecution, suffering. Wait a minute, what? Oh, yeah! Oh, and by the way, you're going to pick up your cross daily. I know this is deeply profound, but you know what daily means? Every day! Daily: pick up your cross, and you die to yourself, and you follow Him.

You give up your rights to yourself because you are not your own. You're bought with a price, under new management, if you will, and you follow Him, and you march to the beat of His drum, and His drum alone. You no longer sit on the throne of your life - He does.

You no longer "call the shots" in your life. I hate that word "shots," but anyway, no pun intended. He does. He's Lord and Savior, right? Have you ever made that delineation? Yeah, Jesus is my savior. Yeah, that's great. Is he your Lord?

Oh, I can hear it now, this is not "Lordship Salvation." This is called sanctification. When you come to Christ, that's salvation, and that commences the process of sanctification.

Oh, by the way, Romans 8:28? We love that verse, don't we? "For we know that God works all things together for the good to them that love Him and are called according to His purpose." Oh, my goodness, we sing songs, quote it, know it, and love it.

What about the next verse? Do you know what the next verse says, verse 29? You don't have to look it up right now. That's your homework, by the way. It's again a scriptural qualifier if I can call it that, where Paul then goes on to say this is what it means "to be called according to God's purpose."

What does it mean, Paul? Oh, it means that God is conforming you, shaping you, making you more like Jesus. Well, that sounds good. Oh, wait, just a second. Do you know how He's going to do that?

Isaiah tells us it's through the furnace of affliction. I don't want that. No, but that's how He makes you and conforms you into the image of Christ.

Thank you again, David, wherever you are, and the worship team for doing that song, that hymn, that classic, a timeless hymn of old, "Have Thine Own Way, Lord." One of my favorites, along with all my other favorites, like "God, You're So Good," that one too. "Have Thine own way, Lord, have Thine own way. Thou art the potter; I am the clay."

Do you know how potters make clay and beautiful vessels upon which they when they're finished... "Faithful is He who began that work in you to complete it." The Creator puts His name on His workmanship, "poema" in the original language, where we get our English word for "poem."

We're His workmanship. We're His work of art, and when it's finished, whoa, He puts his name on it, it's perfect. The problem is the process. You see, it starts off as clay in the potter's hands.

Have you ever seen a potter? You can go online, watch some videos. Be careful what videos you watch online. If they're still there, but anyway.... Sorry, I digress.

The potter takes the clay, and he begins by sticking His hand in it. He's going to make this beautiful vessel, and he takes all of the gook out of it. Once he's got all of that out, he then takes this clay and puts it on the wheel.

You know, the wheel that spins around at 998 miles per hour? Do you know what I'm talking about? That's when you are going, Lord, what are You doing? I'm refining you! I'm making you more like Jesus. Wait! Whoa, whoa, whoa!

Then as you're spinning around, He takes His hand (the potter), and He's going to start doing some shaping here, and He goes, bam! Ooh! I'm still going around, by the way. But that's what makes the vessel take shape.

Then finally, when that wheel stops, "Oh, God, thank You, Jesus, thank God!" He takes that vessel, and He puts it in, appropriately named the "kiln." You're killing me! The furnace! God, what are You doing? Then He turns the heat up. I'm not finished yet. Yeah, God, this is a fiery trial! I know. I'm in the furnace. I know, I'm refining you. Why this way?

I would much rather Isaiah said that instead of choosing the furnace of affliction to refine us, He would have said, I choose the beaches of Hawaii to refine you. That's my idea of refining so refined and tanned, too. Now you're going to get tanned, but it's just going to be in the furnace.

That's His purpose. When Paul says, "His purpose," that's the purpose. "All who are called according to His purpose." That's His purpose. If you're asking yourself the question and inquiring of the Lord as you go through this trial in your life, "Lord, what is the purpose of this?"

That's the answer. I'm making you more like Jesus, in the image of My Son, Jesus, the Christ. What was Jesus like? Oh. Jesus was humble, meek, patient, loving. He is love. Jesus was gentle. He was kind, all of those things, and by the way, that's the fruit of the Holy Spirit. That's His purpose.

I find it interesting that Paul would remind Timothy of the kinds of things that happened to him when he was in Antioch, Iconium, and especially Lystra because that's where Timothy is from. His mother was Jewish, his father Greek, and that's where the Apostle Paul and Timothy connected the first time. At this point in Paul's life, at the end of his life, it has had to have been more than 14 years.

The reason I say that is because when he writes to the Corinthians, he refers to what many believe happened to him in Lystra in the third person, and he says, "14 years ago, I know of a man." He is speaking of himself, and that's interesting too, isn't it? He didn't say a word to anyone for 14 years about that what happened to him. He's speaking of what happened to him in Lystra, and you know what's so fascinating?

By the way, I don't know how many years ago it was now we went through the book of Acts. It's one of the most fascinating studies of a book in all of the Bible. So many details there for us about what happened to Paul. So, he's there in Lystra. They stone him to death, leave him for dead. Many believe he was dead.

That's when he was caught up to the third heaven shown that which would be criminal to try to even articulate and communicate in the realm of the natural, the glory that awaits. "We see through a glass dimly," blurry, darkly, if you will.

And after he is basically resuscitated or brought back, he goes back into Lystra. Listen, I can take a hint. You try to kill me? I'm not going back in there, but Paul does and isn't it interesting that that's where Timothy was from?

Let's get back to our question here: Why would the Apostle Paul deem it necessary by the Holy Spirit to remind Timothy of all that had happened to him? I mean, he was almost killed in Iconium. He was again stoned and left for dead in Lystra. When he was in Antioch, he was run out of town for preaching the gospel.

But again, with the Apostle Paul, I like how one said it, "Wherever the Apostle Paul went, he started a riot." Wherever I go, I have coffee. But God.

He explains this, he reminds Timothy of this, I believe, so he can say, "Yeah, Timothy, you know, in fact, you were there in Lystra. You know all that has happened to me. You've seen how I've lived my life. But God delivered me from them all, keyword, "all."

Why do I emphasize that? It's because is it not true that the enemy is so good at putting thoughts in your mind when you're going through it - when you're in your Lystra?

It's like, yeah, God got you through that, but this is how it ends. It is? Yeah. You're not going to make it through this one. Yeah, but like we talked about in the update, God delivered me from the lion and the bear. He's certainly going to deliver me from this uncircumcised Philistine, David would say. No, not this time. That was then; this is now. That's the enemy.

That's a lie. He's the same God yesterday, today, and forever. It's not just that God will deliver you. It's that God will deliver you from all. All! Do you know what "all" means? Again, I know deeply profound. All! Everything!

No matter what it is! No matter how bad it gets, and it could get bad! In fact, not only could it get bad, and it already is, as we're going to see here in a moment, it's going to go from bad to worse.

That's our 2nd one (#2) in verses 12-13. I would suggest that these two verses are amongst the most, if not the most, unpopular verses in all of the Bible. And when you teach the Bible book-by-book, chapter by chapter, verse-by-verse, you can't skip over it.

I'll confess that if I did not teach expositionally through the Bible this way, I probably wouldn't teach these two. If I'm being honest, I would not teach, God I don't want to. What? You know, and actually,

I probably could close to wrapping my mind around verse 12, but to add insult to injury - we've got verse 13.

So, in other words, Timothy, not only will those who want to live godly lives in Christ Jesus suffer persecution, while you're suffering persecution for living a godly life - do you know what evil is going to do? Evil is going to get worse. Oh, it's bad now! But it's going to go from bad to worse and even worser. I know that's not a word. Again, don't email me.

That's what he's saying. Now we have a problem, and we need to deal with it. What's the problem? The problem is it's here in God's Word, we accept it, we read it, we teach it, we hear it, and that's where we leave it. So that when, not if, when persecution comes, and persecution's here. By the way, I don't know if you've noticed? It's you have to RSVP. We don't quite accept it.

Again, I don't necessarily fault the well-intentioned Christian or would-be Christian. I fault the lukewarm pulpit and the pastor behind it who preaches not the Word, the whole counsel of God, but they preach a "cotton-candy Christianity."

In fact, we just got done hearing Paul warn Timothy about how that... Oh, no, wait, that's coming up. Man, I'm all messed up like I was on Thursday night. Thank you for your grace, by the way, on Thursday night. I was scatterbrained dealing with all my giants.

Paul tells Timothy that here's what's going to happen in the last days. There are going to be people that are going to flock in great numbers to teachers who will tell them what their ears are itching to hear.

Do you know what that means? In order to do that, they're going to say to the preacher who's preaching the Word and sound doctrine, hey, we're not going to put up with that. We don't have to. We're not going to tolerate sound doctrine because there's a church right here down the street that's going to give away free iPads.

I'm not joking, by the way. They've got the gimmicks. Oh, and by the way, just so you know if you ever visit, which I wouldn't recommend you visit a church like this. The first thing you're going to notice when you walk in is this place is cool, and the pastor is hip, unlike your pastor, by the way. I mean, he's got skinny jeans and a latte.

Look, I would never do that to you. That would be cruel. And get this: The worship, ho! I mean, these guys, they're jamming, and that's most of the service, by the way. So maybe 30 minutes later, is the pastor coming up? Yeah. Who's the pastor? That's the pastor? Yeah. How old is he?

He comes up, and as one said, "he delivers a sermonette for the Christianette." Twenty minutes, keep it short! I mean, look at who's there. They're sitting there with their arms folded going... Oh, by the way, don't even think about it [holding up the Bible].

Oh, you can touch on certain verses. You'd better stay away from 2 Timothy Chapter 3:10-13, or I'm not coming back! I'll go find another church. I know that's a silly way to describe it, but it's true. They're not going to put up with it.

So, when you say to a Christian: This is the cost. You need to count it. This is what is in store. You need to accept it. This is what will happen. You need to be ready and steady for it. To disregard it, to dismiss it is to do so to your own peril, and here's why. Because when, again, not if, when it comes and it's coming.

Forget persecution! We could talk about this in the context and frame it in the context of just trials. When life hits, and life hits and I've been sitting under the teaching of a church where the pastor is feeding me fluff, nothing but cotton candy, and all I've got are spiritual cavities. I took it too far, I know.

But I'm malnourished! I have no spiritual strength or nourishment, so I'm too weak now. So, when my son is a prodigal or my daughter is wayward, or my child dies, or my wife or husband says, I'm out of here - and life hits! I don't mean to yell.

But I thank God that when I came to Christ and was born-again, that I got on the solid ground of God's Word because when life hit, where else was I going to go? I would have collapsed, caved, crumbled. I feel bad for Christians who are ill-prepared for what's coming and what could very well come, and in fact, is already here for the Christian prior to the rapture.

Yeah, but Pastor, you're always telling us every week that the rapture - we're going to be taken out. Yeah, we are. But what if things get much worse for the Christian between now and then? We might suffer persecution. It's very likely. In fact, I would argue it's probable more even than possible. It's more probable than possible. Yeah, we're going to go through tribulation, not "The Tribulation."

Jesus said in John's Gospel Chapter 16:33, it's recorded. "In this world, you will have persecution, in this world you will have tribulation, in this world you will have hardship, but be of good cheer." Why? "Because I have overcome the world, and I'm coming to take you out of the world."

The Apostle Paul would say it like this, "We're not just conquerors. We are more than conquerors." Are you a conqueror? I'm more than a conqueror. How about that? That's what we are in Christ.

Again, we talked about this in the Prophecy Update concerning David slaying this giant. God wants us to know that this is in store for those, please listen, who desire to live godly lives. This is what's in store and for those who do live godly lives, knowing this prepares you and preempts you from being derailed when, again not if, persecuted.

That's what God wants you to know because if you think about it when you're caught off guard, it makes it even worse, right? I mean, at least if you're prepared for it, it doesn't completely blindside you. So here you are. You've really gotten serious, especially with everything that's going in on the world.

You've really gotten serious about your relationship with the Lord. I applaud you. I commend you. But you need to know this: What comes packaged with that? Your commitment to get serious about the things of God.

Again, like we talked about in the update, we're in a battleground, not a playground. We don't live in a world anymore that is forgiving of playing church or playing Christianity. It may have been more forgiving of that before all of this happened. It's not now, and we're never going back to that. Period! That's over. That will never happen.

There's no more time. We're at war. This is a war in the realm of the spiritual, and we had better get serious. We're in a battleground, not a playground. This is no time to play. It's time to get serious. I'm going to close. Some of you are like, "Thank you, Jesus, he's going to close."

I want to close by posing two questions, and these are questions that all of us, myself included, would do well to inquire of the Lord and consider. So please, if you would think through these questions, starting with this first one.

Question #1. Does knowing that persecution is proportionate to godliness mean that the absence of persecution is evidence of ungodliness?

Let me ask the same question a different way: Is the absence of any persecution in my Christian life evidence of the lack of godliness in my Christian life?

Listen, please, allow the Holy Spirit to search your heart. Give Him unfettered access to that deep recess in your heart, and let Him remove whatever it is that has taken up residence in your life that is destroying your life.

Here's the second question, does knowing that evil and deception... By the way, Paul says very clearly, they're deceived, and they're deceiving. That would stand to reason, right, verse 13? Because deceivers deceive.

Does that make sense? If you're deceived, you're going to deceive. You've heard that expression that "hurt people, hurt people"? Well, it goes for deception too: Deceived people deceive people. Okay, let's get back to our question.

Question #2 Does knowing that evil and deception is even now going from bad to worse produce in you fear? Or does it produce a sanctified resolve to get serious about your faith?

I pray it's the latter. I pray that knowing this, understanding this, and even in some measure seeing this play out in our world today will have the much-needed effect of waking you up, even shaking you up.

There's no more time. I need to get serious about the things of God. I can't play around anymore. Can't play fast and loose anymore. The time is at hand.

Now maybe it does produce in you fear and trepidation. You look around what's happening, and then it doesn't help when I talk about, you're going to be persecuted. Have a nice day and that terrifies you. That might be a good thing.

That might be a good thing. What do you mean? Well, maybe that's what it takes. Now we know that God has not given us a spirit of fear, but there is what we call the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom, and the fear of the Lord, which is to hate evil.

That's the fear of the Lord. That's the fear! Maybe this needs to produce in you a fear of the Lord.

I think about in the Old Testament when it says that there was no fear of God in their eyes. Every man did whatever he wanted, whatever he pleased. There was no fear of God." Well, is that not an apt description of what we see happening today? There is no fear of God.

Well, I hate to close on that note because some of you are looking at me with that look. So why don't you stand and quit looking at me, and we'll pray?

Lord, I did my best, I mean, the Holy Spirit takes it from here, Lord, and I'm so grateful for that. Because it's really only the Holy Spirit that can take this, now that we've seen and heard here today

in Your Word, and do that needed work in our lives, in our hearts. Lord, thank You for readying us and steadying us for that which may, in fact, be ahead for us.

Lord, I know that You love us so much that you want us to be ready. You don't want us to falter or fall. Lord, thank You for this much-needed reminder of what the cost of following You is.

Lord, I pray for some, I'll include myself, that maybe today is a good reference point for us to revisit - counting the cost.

Lord, thank You. We love You. In Jesus' name. Amen.