

**Unshakable Series – Part Four**  
**UNSHAKABLE IN THE LAST DAYS**

2 Timothy 3:1-13

Lester Zimmerman

This morning we continue our study in the book of 2 Timothy. Paul is writing from prison as he awaits his execution for preaching the gospel. He is writing to a young man named Timothy who he mentored and to whom he was passing on the baton.

This morning we are at chapter three in this letter where Paul is preparing Timothy to stand strong and be unshakable during a tough period of moral decline in the nation and the increasing persecution against Christianity.

The title of my message this morning is UNSHAKABLE IN THE LAST DAYS.

Paul writes to Timothy about the “last days”. The “last days” define the period of time from Christ’s ascension into heaven until his return. So, we are in this period of time called the “last days”. Some would describe us as being in the last of the last days. We are so much closer to Christ’s return.

Paul’s description of how bad things were in society sound a lot like today. In many ways America and Europe are following in the footsteps of the Roman empire as it was in deep moral decline.

Let’s read Paul’s description of what we can expect in the last days.

**2 Timothy 3:1-5**

**<sup>1</sup> But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. <sup>2</sup> People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, <sup>3</sup> without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, <sup>4</sup> treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— <sup>5</sup> having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.**

The closer we get to Christ’s return, people will act more and more like this. Paul is saying we shouldn’t be surprised by this or shaken when these hard times come.

In these last days things are going to get really tough in our world and in our nation.

- *“But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days”*
- *People are going to become really nasty and selfish.*
- *More intolerant and abusive of Christians and our values.*

**1. When people become lovers of pleasure and when the scriptures are no longer the bases for moral authority, then the hearts of men and women become corrupt.**

You see, when I no longer believe in the absolute authority of God and his word, I then become an authority to myself. I become my own God. I decide what's right and wrong.

And if you get in the way of my pleasure and my agenda, I will do whatever I need to, to get you out of my way. If I need to slander you, lie, be brutal, treacherous, abusive, I will. That is the mentality of our day.

- This is Last Day behavior of a world that has turned its back on God.
- Evil begins to rule the culture.

Paul is saying in the last days you will see a moving away from truth, holiness, and kindness to a divisive, unholy, ungrateful, slanderous spirit becoming the norm in society.

We see it in the media and all over. We are more divided and polarized than ever before. Truth doesn't really matter as long as you win. And if you destroy the other person in the process, well, too bad.

Paul says we will also see these effects on our youth culture.

**2. Many youth will embrace a secular worldview that is based on moral relativism. This will cause them to reject the faith of their godly parents.**

Paul describes it as being disobedient to their parents. Not listening to the spiritual guidance of mom and dad. Many in the culture today, who grew up in the church, are abandoning their faith. Moral relativism means there are no absolutes.

I am so grateful and proud of our youth here at Petra. They are being taught to be counter-culture and reject the secular worldview. They are impacting their generation for Christ. Some are leading and involved in bible studies in their schools. They are sharing their faith and living their faith boldly.

My prayer is that our youth become the leaders, influencers and standard bearers in their schools and peer groups and help turn our nation back to God.

In Mathew 24, Jesus describes what the last days will be like.

**Matthew 24:10-14**

**<sup>10</sup> At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, <sup>11</sup> and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. <sup>12</sup> Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, <sup>13</sup> but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. <sup>14</sup> And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.**

One encouraging thing Jesus says is that even though things will go from bad to worse in the last days, the advancement of the gospel will not be shut down. It will be preached to the whole world in these last days.

**3. In the last days evil and persecution will increase but at the same time the church will grow and become stronger.**

I like what Paul said in Chapter 2: *You can chain me up, but you can't chain the gospel*. Over the centuries ruthless rulers have tried to stamp out Christianity. But the harder they try the more it spreads.

Fed to lions and hunted like animals, struggling first century Christianity gradually grew to dominate the Roman Empire.

Under Chairman Mao and Chinese Communism, **professing Christians in China grew from 1.5 million in 1970 to 65 million in just twenty years**

In hostile Iran and Afghanistan, we are seeing the world's fastest growing Christian populations. **In Iran, the Evangelical population is growing annually at 19.6 %. In Afghanistan, the rate is 16.7%.**

The Church has seen dramatic and explosive growth in Asia, Africa and South America. The growth of the African Church in particular is amazing. **In 1900 there were fewer than 9 million Christians in Africa. Now there are more than 541 million. In the last 15 years alone, the Church in Africa has seen a 51% increase.**

In America and Europe there had been a decline but that can change. That's why we pray for revival.

So, while the world becomes more decadent and evil, the light of the gospel shines brighter and becomes more attractive to a hungry disillusioned world. The best days are yet ahead for the church. But we must understand that being a follower of Jesus will become more difficult at the same time.

That's why Paul and Jesus tell us what we can expect. So, we don't get discouraged. So, we are not shaken in our faith in these last days. So, we stand strong even in the midst of persecution and a great falling away of some Christians.

Paul goes on to address another problem we need to confront. He talks about men who take advantage of women.

## 2 Timothy 3:6-9

**<sup>6</sup>They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over gullible women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, <sup>7</sup>always learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. <sup>8</sup>Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these teachers oppose the truth. They are men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected. <sup>9</sup>But they will not get very far because, as in the case of those men, their folly will be clear to everyone.**

Paul describes a two-fold problem. Many women were unemployed, and some were widows and in those days that made it hard for them to live. This made them more vulnerable to the advances and promises of unscrupulous men.

Just like in Paul's day, some women are compromising their standards in order to have a man in their life. Some allow men to worm their way into their lives. A man gets close and makes her feel good. Slowly, swayed by her own desires and need, she gives into him and his sweet talk.

- Maybe she moves in with him or allows him to move in with her. Friends with benefits as it is called today. Paul is saying women often get ensnared in this trap because they haven't dealt with their own issues and desires.

Women need to understand their amazing beauty and worth to God as his daughters. God will take care of them. They don't need to lower their standards. God will provide what is best for them according to his will and plan. Trust him.

Paul then goes after these men. He says men who treat women this way are depraved. They are evil for the way they take advantage of women who are struggling. They use them for their own pleasure.

- And as far as their faith is concerned Paul rejects their claims to being a Christian. Christians don't act that way *"as far as their faith is concerned, they are rejected."*

Paul warns these men that God will deal with them. **<sup>9</sup>But they will not get very far because, as in the case of those men, their folly will be clear to everyone.**

- Reckoning day is coming. He will not let them get away with this. He will expose them for the depraved person they really are.

## 2 Timothy 3:10-13

**<sup>10</sup>You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, <sup>11</sup>persecutions, 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.**

**<sup>12</sup>In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, <sup>13</sup>while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.**

This brings me to my last point for this message. How do we live in these last days?

**4. We are to live in the opposite spirit of our age and respond with a Christ like spirit to those who oppose us.**

Paul explains that if you stand up for godliness people will oppose you. They opposed Jesus and will oppose his followers.

**“In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” Vs.12**

I am reminded of Tim Tebow. A former professional football quarterback, Heisman Trophy winner, and current professional baseball player. He has been mocked and targeted for his Christian values of abstinence before marriage, not drinking alcohol and living by his Christian values. He responds in a Christ like way to those who make fun of him. He is a great role model.

With God’s help we can be unshakable when our values and faith are attacked and challenged.

Paul says, “follow my example”. He lived in the opposite spirit of our age.

- Instead of fear he stood in faith.
- Instead of becoming discouraged, he was patient
- Instead of getting angry at those who gave him a hard time, he responded in love to their hatred.
- Instead of throwing in the towel and compromising, he responded with the endurance that God gave him.
- Instead getting mad at God for allowing suffering and persecution, he considered it an honor to suffer for his savior.

This is how we live and overcome in these last days. This is how we become unshakable in the last days.

Conclusion

Closing Song