

## **Title: Lesson 11: The Last Days Are Now!**

**Text: 2 Timothy 3:1–9**

**This life is hard.**

We live in a world marked by cancer and chronic illness.

Financial strain and job loss.

Broken relationships and family conflict.

Grief, disappointment, and uncertainty.

And that is true for everyone.

But for the follower of Christ, there is an added layer of difficulty.

Trying to live faithfully in a world that is increasingly hostile to truth is hard!

You would think following Christ would simplify life.

In reality, it complicates it.

Every day we are faced with decisions that either move us closer to Christlikeness or subtly pull us away from it.

And the pressure does not usually come from open enemies, but from voices that *sound* Christian while quietly redefining what Christianity actually is.

On Facebook the other day one post said...

*“An Episcopal female pastor delivered a sermon claiming Christians should avoid the word ‘Sinner’ and that we should not be attending a Church that tells us that ‘you’re going to Hell.’”*

This situation flies in the face of what the scripture not only reveals about pastors, but also that a good church must talk about sin and hell, not just God’s love.

Christians get this kind of thing thrown at them all the time and it is profoundly difficult.

Nearly two thousand years ago, the Apostle Paul wrote these words to Timothy, a young pastor ministering in a difficult and deceptive spiritual climate.

Paul does not minimize the hardship Timothy will face.

In fact, he warns him plainly that in the last days, following Christ will become increasingly difficult, especially because of spiritual deception within the church.

But Paul also writes to steady Timothy’s heart that in the end, it will be okay!

## **Main Idea: Life is Hard, but God Will Make Things Right!**

Paul wants Timothy, and us, to understand that hardship is not a sign of God's absence, but a reality of living faithfully in the last days.

If God is sovereign and good, why does life seem to grow more difficult the closer we get to the end?

Paul begins by identifying the reality Timothy must accept before he can faithfully respond.

### **1. This Life is Hard (v. 1)**

#### **2 Timothy 3:1 ESV**

*<sup>1</sup> But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty.*

Paul begins with a command: ***“Understand this.”***

Timothy is not being invited into speculation. He is being prepared for reality.

When Paul speaks of ***“the last days,”*** he is not referring only to a brief period at the very end of history.

In the New Testament, ***“the last days”*** describe the entire age between Christ's first coming and His return.

The last days began with the resurrection of Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

This is the age in which the church now lives.

That means Timothy was living in the last days.

And so are we.

Paul's point is simple but sobering: life in this age will be marked by seasons of real difficulty for those who follow Christ.

These seasons are not signs that God has lost control.

They are part of what it means to live faithfully in a fallen world that increasingly resists God's truth.

Paul wants Timothy to expect difficulty so that he is not shaken by it.

Timothy's difficulty did not come primarily from the surrounding culture, but from false teachers operating within the church.

Paul has already named some of these men, such as Hymenaeus and Philetus, who claimed the resurrection had already occurred.

Their teaching did not merely confuse people, it undermined faith, ruined listeners, and spread spiritual corruption like gangrene.

This is why Timothy's task was so difficult.

False teaching rarely announces itself as false.

It often sounds Christian, uses Christian language, and claims Christian authority, while quietly distorting the truth of the gospel.

Why is dealing with false teaching difficult?

Because, false teaching, in many ways, seems to be authentically Christian.

False teaching is deceptive by design, often appearing faithful on the surface while subtly redirecting hearts away from the true gospel.

As the pastor/leader of the church, Timothy couldn't just preach the truth (as necessary and good as this is), he also needed to refute error.

And he needed to train his congregation in this as well.

Scripture makes it clear that the last days are marked by recurring seasons of difficulty growing in frequency!

From Pentecost onward, the people of God have faced opposition, deception, and suffering.

The apostles experienced it.

Paul experienced it.

Timothy experienced it.

Jesus described these hardships as birth pains.

They are real, they are painful, and they increase as history moves toward its conclusion.

The point is not that every generation is worse than the one before it, but that difficulty is normal for life in this age, and it will intensify as Christ's return draws nearer.

**Matthew 24:1-14 ESV**

*<sup>1</sup> Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. <sup>2</sup> But he answered them, “You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.” <sup>3</sup> As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” <sup>4</sup> And Jesus answered them, “See that no one leads you astray. <sup>5</sup> For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray. <sup>6</sup> And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. <sup>7</sup> For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. <sup>8</sup> All these are but the beginning of the birth pains. <sup>9</sup> “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name’s sake. <sup>10</sup> And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. <sup>11</sup> And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. <sup>12</sup> And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. <sup>13</sup> But the one who endures to the end will be saved. <sup>14</sup> And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.*

This passage is indicative of “The Last Days.”

And yet we, followers of Christ, are called to be faithful.

There is an amazing story in the book of Acts that demonstrates faithfulness in the midst of persecution and the proclamation of the gospel...

#### **Acts 5:40–42 ESV**

*<sup>40</sup> and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. <sup>41</sup> Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. <sup>42</sup> And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.*

Here is the point. When you live for the gospel, expect difficulty.

Christ is contrary to the norms of this life. The world’s system is opposed to Jesus.

So, what are you supposed to do in light of this?

Be faithful in living out your faith.

Be bold in speaking the truth.

Be determined to obey God rather than man.

Entrust your soul to Christ for safekeeping and then live boldly for Him.

**Review:**

- Life is Hard, but God Will Make Things Right!
  - This Life is Hard
- This life is indeed hard, and Paul now explains why.

**2. This Life is Full of Wickedness (vs. 2–5)**

In these verses, Paul explains *why* life in the last days is so difficult.

The source of the wickedness in our world is not merely cultural systems or external pressures.

It is the human heart.

Paul makes it unmistakably clear: difficult times come because people are sinful, self-centered, and resistant to God.

**2 Timothy 3:2–5 ESV**

*For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, <sup>3</sup> heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, <sup>4</sup> treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, <sup>5</sup> having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.*

Scripture reminds us that human sin is nothing new.

As Ecclesiastes says, *“there is nothing new under the sun.”*

Yet Paul is not saying these sins suddenly appear for the first time in the last days.

He is saying they become increasingly visible, normalized, and pervasive as history moves toward its conclusion.

What once may have been restrained or recognized as evil is now increasingly accepted, celebrated, and defended.

Paul then provides Timothy with a sobering catalog of the attitudes and behaviors that will mark people living in the last days.

This list is not given merely to help us diagnose the culture around us.

It is given so that we examine our own hearts and actively remove any trace of these sins from our lives.

**Lovers of self** – People whose highest love is themselves, making self-interest the center of life.

**Lovers of money** – People who cherish wealth and trust it for security instead of God.

**Proud** – People who boast about themselves and exaggerate their own importance.

**Arrogant** – People who look down on others with a haughty, superior attitude.

**Abusive** – People who use words to wound, revile, or show contempt for others and for God.

**Disobedient to parents** – People who reject God-given authority and refuse submission in the home.

**Ungrateful** – People who fail to acknowledge or appreciate God's grace and human kindness.

**Unholy** – People who live without reverence for God or devotion to what is sacred.

**Heartless** – People who lack natural affection, even toward family.

**Unappeasable** – People who refuse reconciliation and remain unwilling to forgive.

**Slandorous** – People who damage others through false, malicious, or deceitful speech.

**Without self-control** – People ruled by their desires rather than restrained by righteousness.

**Brutal** – People who are harsh, cruel, and lacking gentleness.

**Not loving good** – People who have no affection for what is morally good or pleasing to God.

**Treacherous** – People who betray trust and loyalty for personal advantage.

**Reckless** – People who act rashly without wisdom or regard for consequences.

**Swollen with conceit** – People puffed up with pride and blinded by self-importance.

**Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God** – People who choose personal enjoyment over devotion to God.

**Having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power** – People who display religious form while rejecting the transforming power of true faith.

Paul's command is clear and unmistakable: *"Avoid such people."*

Why? Because character is contagious.

**1 Corinthians 15:33 ESV**

<sup>33</sup> *Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals."*

**Proverbs 13:20 ESV**

<sup>20</sup> *Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.*

Scripture makes several truths unmistakably clear.

We are living in the last days because Christ's resurrection and ascension ushered them in.

These sins have existed since the fall, but Scripture also teaches that they will increase in visibility and influence as the end draws nearer.

Church history confirms this pattern.

There are seasons when these attitudes dominate a culture more fully than others.

We are living in one such season now.

And every passing day brings us one step closer to the return of Christ.

One commentator summarizes Paul's list this way...

*"This catalog of vices exposes a society where self has replaced God at the center, resulting in arrogance, cruelty, and lovelessness."— John MacArthur, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 2 Timothy, on [2 Timothy 3:2–4](#)*

We live in a society that increasingly displays these wicked characteristics.

How should a believer in Christ respond?

**Begin with Honest Self-Examination, Not Cultural Condemnation**

Before we point the finger at *"them,"* Paul intends this list to press inward on **us**.

These sins are not merely pagan behaviors.

They are **heart-level attitudes** that can quietly take root in believers.

**2 Corinthians 13:5 ESV**

*<sup>5</sup> Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!*

The question is not merely, “*Do I see this in the world?*”

The question is, “*Where do I see traces of this in my own heart?*”

Repentance always begins with humility.

### **Intentionally Cultivate Godly Character in Contrast to the Culture**

Paul’s list shows us what **marks the last days**, but Scripture also tells us what should mark **the people of God**.

Where the world is marked by:

- Self-love → we pursue self-denial
- Pride → we pursue humility
- Pleasure → we pursue godliness
- Brutality → we pursue gentleness
- Lovelessness → we pursue Christlike love

*“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience...”* ([Galatians 5:22–23](#))

We actively **replace it with righteousness**.

### **Be Wise About Influence and Intentional About Relationships**

Paul’s command is clear and sobering:

*“Avoid such people.”* ([2 Timothy 3:5](#))

This does **not** mean isolation from unbelievers, but it does mean discernment about **who shapes your thinking, affections, and habits**. (Psalm 1)

Influence is never neutral.

### **1 Corinthians 15:33 ESV**

<sup>33</sup> *Do not be deceived: “Bad company ruins good morals.”*

Believers should ask:

- Who am I learning from?



- Who am I listening to?
- Who am I becoming like?

### Review: Recap the Point

- **Life is Hard, but God Will Make Things Right!**
  - **This Life is Hard**
  - **This Life is Full of Wickedness**
- Sometimes living in a wicked, sin-cursed world raises an important question.

### 3. This Life Will be Made Right (vs. 6–9)

In these verses, Paul shows us that God begins making things right **now** by exposing false teachers, and He will finish making all things right **then**, when Christ returns.

When we read a passage like this, especially verses 6–8, our **justice muscle** wants to flex.

We long to see what is wrong made right.

We want deception exposed.

We want truth to win.

Yet in this life, the justice we desire often feels delayed and unresolved.

Paul continues from his list in verses 2–5 and now exposes how false teachers operate.

He does not merely describe their character.

He reveals their tactics.

### 2 Timothy 3:6–7 ESV

*<sup>6</sup> For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, <sup>7</sup> always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth.*

Paul is not attacking women as a group. He is exposing a strategy.

These false teachers do not teach openly or courageously.

They work quietly and deceptively, infiltrating homes and targeting those who are spiritually naïve, weighed down by guilt, confusion, and unresolved sin.

Because these individuals lack grounding in the truth, they become susceptible to teaching that promises relief without repentance and spirituality without transformation.

The result is tragic. They are always learning, always sampling new ideas, yet never arriving at the truth that actually changes the heart.

This sampling of new ideas is spiritual stagnation disguised as growth.

Paul then widens the lens to show that this kind of opposition to truth is nothing new.

### **2 Timothy 3:8 ESV**

*<sup>8</sup> Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith.*

Paul reminds Timothy that opposition to God's truth has always existed.

Just as **Jannes** and **Jambres** resisted **Moses**, so these false teachers oppose the gospel.

Their resistance is not merely intellectual disagreement.

It reveals corruption of mind and a heart that stands in opposition to God's truth.

Despite their claims to insight or authority, these individuals are disqualified regarding the faith.

Their teaching and their lives betray them. False teachers are exposed not only by what they say, but by the way they resist truth and refuse submission to it.

But Paul does not leave Timothy with a warning alone. He now gives him assurance.

### **2 Timothy 3:9 ESV**

*<sup>9</sup> But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men.*

Paul's is deliberate and comforting.

When Paul says these false teachers "*will not get very far,*" he is saying they will not make lasting progress.

Their influence may spread for a time, but it is limited.

God places boundaries on deception.

Paul then uses the word **folly**. This word refers to senselessness, a lack of understanding, a kind of moral and spiritual stupidity.

In other words, what appears persuasive for a season will eventually be exposed as empty and foolish.

*“Be sure your sin will find you out.”* – Numbers 32:23

He also says their folly will be **plain** to all. That word means obvious, clearly evident, impossible to miss.

Over time, the truth has a way of revealing what is false. Deception cannot hide forever.

Just as the foolishness of Jannes and Jambres was eventually exposed before all, so it will be with every false teacher.

God is not threatened by deception. Truth does not bend. And false teaching will not endure.

When Paul tells Timothy that these men *“will not get very far,”* he is reminding him that God is already at work—correcting what is wrong, limiting deception, and protecting His church.

This is how God begins making things right now, even as we wait for the day when He will make all things right forever.

Ladies and gentlemen, difficult times are upon us.

True believers can find it difficult to stand for what the bible says.

Many who claim the Name of Christ find it easier to capitulate than obey the word of the Lord.

They are easily swayed by false teaching because they are ultimately not interested in what God says about how they should live their lives.

Instead, they want their ears tickled with fanciful ideas about spirituality or worse, they become authorities over the Bible.

They repeat the oldest lie in human history, **questioning** God’s Word rather than **submitting** to it. – *“Did God really say...” - Satan*

But the truth of the matter is, God is for us and no one can be against us!

False teachers may have some traction here and there, but God will win in the end and His truth will prevail!

Paul’s promise in verse 9 is not the end of the story.

It is the beginning of a much larger promise that runs through all of Scripture: God will make all things right.

### **2 Thessalonians 1:6–10 ESV**

<sup>6</sup> since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, <sup>7</sup> and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels <sup>8</sup> in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. <sup>9</sup> They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, <sup>10</sup> when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.

### **Revelation 21:1–5 ESV**

<sup>1</sup> Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” <sup>5</sup> And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

Russell Moore offers a concise articulation of this theme: *“All of Christian theology points toward an end—an end where Jesus overcomes the satanic reign of death and restores God’s original creation order.... It is instead the vision toward which all of Scripture is pointing—and the vision that grounds the hope of the gathered church and the individual believer.”* - Russell Moore

Bruce Riley Ashford, “The Church in the Mission of God,” in *The Community of Jesus: A Theology of the Church*, ed. Kendell Easley and Christopher W. Morgan (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2013), 249.

False teaching and all false teachers will ultimately be found out and done away with.

**Rest** in the fact that God will make all things right.

This world is under the influence of the Evil one.

**One day**, He will be cast into the lake that burns with fire for all eternity.

**Rest** in the fact that God will make all things right.

If you are in Christ, you will enjoy Christ forever and ever, Amen! **Rest** in this reality.

## Conclusion

Life is hard.

This world is wicked.

But **God will make things right.**

False teachers will not win.

Truth will not fail.

God is not threatened.

So stand firm.

Speak truth.

Trust the Lord.

Christ is coming.

Justice is sure.

Hope is secure.

Because though life is hard and this world is broken,

**God will make all things right.**