

April 15

Scriptures: Read 2 Timothy 3

Key Verse: “But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” (2 Timothy 3:14, 15) (NIV)

Overview

Paul now turns his attention to the “last days”. He has a bleak outlook: “People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God...” (vv.2-4). Ironically, these self-absorbed people will at the same time be religious, “having a form of godliness” (v.5). They will also have inquiring minds, “always learning” (v.7); but their “godliness” will lack (“deny”) power, and their “learning” will lack (“never able to acknowledge”) truth. In other words, they will be “spiritual” but self-deceived.

So how does one avoid self-deception in religion? Paul tells Timothy, “continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of...” Timothy has been trained in sound doctrine from his childhood (1:5). His mother Lois and his grandmother Eunice were godly women who had given Timothy a solid scriptural basis for faith. Paul continued training Timothy until he was fit (in Paul’s view) to be given the pastorate in Ephesus. Timothy has a sure foundation: a scriptural education taught by trustworthy teachers (“You know those from whom you learned it”). Now, as life’s experience adds to his education, it is filtered and tempered by “the holy Scriptures”. The subjective is balanced by the objective.

Scripture does much more than address felt needs. It meets real needs. That’s why submitting oneself to the study of Scripture means being taught, rebuke, corrected, and trained in righteousness (v.16). It will “bless” us once in a while too, but mainly it will equip us for “every good work” (v.17).

Prayer

Father, we praise You and thank ‘You for the sufficient grace and the many opportunities to put into practice what You have taught us this day.