

**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**

(Saturday—Evening Session)

Message Six

**Being a Vessel unto Honor,
and Pursuing Righteousness, Faith, Love, Peace
with Those Who Call on the Lord out of a Pure Heart**

Scripture Reading: 2 Tim. 2:20-22; Rom. 9:21, 23; 2 Cor. 4:7

I. In 2 Timothy 2:20-21 Paul speaks of honorable and dishonorable vessels:

- A. Honorable vessels are constituted of both the divine nature and the redeemed and regenerated human nature; dishonorable vessels are constituted of the fallen human nature—Eph. 2:2-3; 2 Pet. 1:4.
- B. In Romans 9:21 Paul speaks of vessels unto honor, and in Romans 9:23, of vessels of mercy prepared unto glory.
- C. The fact that we are vessels of honor prepared unto glory means that we have been designed to contain God as our honor and glory.
- D. God chose us so that we may be vessels of honor filled with the processed and consummated Triune God—vv. 21-23; 2 Cor. 13:14.
- E. God wants an open vessel—Rom. 9:23; 2 Cor. 4:7:
 1. God's intention was to create a vessel to contain Him and to express Him, so God only wants an opening of the vessel—2 Tim. 2:21; Rom. 11:24.
 2. If the vessel is open, God can fulfill His purpose, but if the vessel is closed, God's purpose is frustrated—Col. 4:3.
 3. God does not want us to do anything; He wants us only to be a living vessel, a clean, empty, and open vessel.
 4. The summary of Paul's fourteen Epistles may be expressed in two words—*open vessel*.
- F. If we cleanse ourselves from vessels unto dishonor, we will be vessels unto honor—2 Tim. 2:21:
 1. To cleanse ourselves is to depart from unrighteousness (v. 19), as an outward evidence of the inward divine nature.
 2. We should cleanse ourselves not only from anything unrighteous but also from the dishonorable vessels; this means that we must stay away from them.
 3. If we cleanse ourselves from these negative things and negative persons, we will be vessels unto honor.
 4. In 2 Timothy 2:21 *unto honor* is a matter of nature, *sanctified* is a matter of position, *useful* is a matter of practice, and *prepared* is a matter of training.

II. We need to pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace—v. 22:

- A. A governing principle of our Christian life should be pursuing the experience of Christ and the enjoyment of Christ—Phil. 3:12.
- B. Our experience of Christ rests on the foundation of God's righteousness, the unshakable foundation of God's throne—Psa. 89:14:
 - 1. Whereas holiness is related to God's inward nature, righteousness is related to God's outward acts, ways, actions, and activities—Eph. 4:24.
 - 2. Everything that God does is right—Psa. 89:14.
 - 3. The righteousness of God is what God is in His actions with respect to justice and righteousness.
- C. In the New Testament *faith* bears two denotations—objective and subjective:
 - 1. In the objective denotation, *faith* refers to the entire revelation of the New Testament concerning the person of Christ and His redemptive work—Acts 6:7; 14:22; Rom. 16:26; 1 Cor. 15:14; 1 Tim. 1:19b; Jude 3, 20.
 - 2. In the subjective denotation, *faith* refers to the act of believing—Luke 18:8; Mark 11:22.
 - 3. By faith we are born of God to be His sons, partaking of His life and nature to express Him—Gal. 3:26; John 1:12-13; 2 Pet. 1:4.
 - 4. By faith in Christ, we are put into Christ to become the members of His Body, sharing all that He is for His expression—John 3:15; Rom. 12:4-5.
 - 5. Genuine faith is Christ Himself infused into us to become our ability to believe in Him; after the Lord Jesus has been infused into us, He spontaneously becomes our faith—Heb. 11:1, 3; 12:2.
 - 6. *The faith* in 1 Timothy 1:19 is objective, referring to the things in which we believe, whereas *faith* at the beginning of this verse is subjective, referring to the act of our believing.
- D. Love is the nature of God's essence—1 John 4:19:
 - 1. The divine love as God's essential attribute is mainly expressed in sending His Son to redeem us and impart God's life into us so that we may become His children—John 3:16; 1 John 4:9-10.
 - 2. God is love; we love because He first loved us—vv. 8, 19.
 - 3. To abide in love is to live a life in which we love others habitually with the love that is God Himself—v. 8.
- E. The New Testament speaks about both the peace of God and the God of peace—John 20:19; Eph. 2:14; 2 Pet. 1:2:
 - 1. Concerning the God of peace, we need Romans 16:20 and Philippians 4:7.
 - 2. The God of peace guards over our hearts, and He patrols before our hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus—Rom. 15:33; Phil. 4:9.
 - 3. The peace of God and the God of peace are one—1 Thes. 5:23.
 - 4. In our experience peace is a condition that results from grace; grace is a substance, and peace is a condition—1 Cor. 1:3.

III. We all should be those who call on the name of the Lord out of a pure heart—2 Tim. 2:22:

- A. Calling on the name of the Lord is not a new practice in the New Testament; it began with Enosh, the third generation of mankind, in Genesis 4:26:

1. Calling on the name of the Lord was continued by Job (Job 12:4; 27:10), Abraham (Gen. 12:8; 13:4; 21:33), Isaac (26:25), and Moses and the children of Israel (Deut. 4:7); all of these and many others practiced calling upon the Lord in the Old Testament age.
 2. In the New Testament, calling on the name of the Lord was mentioned first by Peter: “It shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved”—Acts 2:21.
 3. According to Acts 7:59, when Stephen was being stoned, he was calling upon the Lord and saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!”
 4. When we preach the gospel and help others to be saved, we need to encourage them to call on the name of the Lord and say, “O Lord Jesus”—cf. Rom. 10:9-13.
 5. Calling on the name of the Lord is the secret not only to our salvation but also to our enjoyment of the Lord’s riches—Eph. 1:18; 3:16.
- B. Second Timothy 2:22 says that we need to “call on the Lord out of a pure heart”:
1. In the Bible to be pure means to be only for God.
 2. A pure heart is a heart fixed on God—Matt. 5:8.
 3. In serving the Lord, we should be purely for Him and not for anything else; we should be wholly for God—1 Thes. 5:23.
 4. Our focus should be on calling on the Lord and having a pure heart—2 Tim. 2:22.