

Message Seven

**The Inoculator**

Scripture Reading: 2 Tim. 2:1-7, 15

**I. The degradation and apostasy of the church took place at the end of the apostle Paul's ministry—cf. 1 Cor. 9:1-2:**

- A. All the believers in Asia turned away from Paul's ministry, including Phygelus and Hermogenes—2 Tim. 1:15.
- B. Hymenaeus and Philetus said that the resurrection had already taken place—2:17-18.
- C. Demas, a co-worker of the apostle Paul, loved the present age and abandoned Paul—4:10.
- D. Alexander the coppersmith did many evil things to the apostle and greatly opposed the apostles' words—vv. 14-15.
- E. At the apostle's first defense no one was with him to support him, but all abandoned him—v. 16.

**II. Even during a period of decline, a downward trend when most of God's people are carried away, there is always a remnant who remains faithful—1 Kings 19:14, 18; Rom. 11:5; Ezra 9:8; Neh. 1:3; Hag. 1:14:**

- A. Onesiphorus was an overcomer who resisted the general trend and stood against the downward current to refresh the Lord's ambassador in spirit, soul, and body, not being ashamed of the apostle's imprisonment on behalf of the Lord's commission—2 Tim. 1:16-18.
- B. Timothy was one who was fully perfected and equipped to minister the word of God, not only in caring for a local church but also in confronting the worsening decline of the church; he was like-souled with the apostle Paul to genuinely care for the church with all the saints and remind them of Paul's ways which were in Christ—3:13-17; Phil. 2:19-22; 1 Cor. 4:17; 1 Tim. 1:16; 4:12.
- C. Luke was the beloved physician, a faithful companion of Paul until his martyrdom—Col. 4:14; Philem. 24; 2 Tim. 4:11.
- D. Titus walked in the same spirit and in the same steps

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as Paul to care for the churches—2 Cor. 7:6-7; 12:18; Titus 1:4-5; 3:12; cf. 2 Tim. 4:10.

E. Mark was useful to Paul for the ministry—v. 11; cf. Acts 15:37.

### **III. Second Timothy is a book written for inoculators, those who would inoculate others against the decline of the church—2:1-7, 15:**

A. The inoculator is a teacher—v. 2; Eph. 3:2:

1. If someone in a local church has a deposit of the Lord's healthy words, he should train the faithful ones that they too may have a good deposit from the Lord and be competent to teach others—1 Tim. 6:20; 2 Tim. 1:12-14.

2. We must shepherd the saints with the teaching of God's economy—Eph. 4:11; Col. 1:27-29; cf. 1 Tim. 3:2; 4:11-16:

a. We should shepherd people by dispensing the divine life in the humanity of Jesus to cherish them and by teaching them the divine truths in the divinity of Christ to nourish them—Eph. 5:29.

b. Shepherding the flock of God by declaring to them all the counsel of God, the economy of God, protects the church from the destroyers of God's building, mingles them with the Triune God as grace, and binds them together in His oneness—Acts 20:26-30; Eph. 4:14; 1 Tim. 1:3-4; Rom. 16:17; cf. Ezek. 33:1-11; 34:25; Zech. 11:7.

3. The inoculating teacher, as a good minister of Christ Jesus, is nourished with the words of the faith and exercises his spirit to live Christ in his daily life for the church life—1 Tim. 4:6-7.

B. The inoculator is a soldier—2 Tim. 2:3-4:

1. The apostle considered their ministry a warfare for Christ, just as the priestly service was considered a military service, a warfare—Num. 4:23, 30, 35; 1 Tim. 1:18; 2 Tim. 4:7.

2. The Lord's ministry is the sounding of the trumpet

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for the army to go to war; to war the good warfare is to war against the different teachings of the dissenters and to carry out God's economy according to the apostles' ministry—1 Cor. 14:8; 1 Tim. 1:18; Num. 10:9; Judg. 7:18.

3. To fight a good fight for the Lord's interests on this earth, we must clear away all earthly entanglements and lay hold on the eternal life, not trusting in our human life—1 Tim. 4:7; 6:12; cf. 2 Cor. 5:4.
  4. We must be vigilant to fight the battle against death, the last enemy of God, by being filled with life to reign in life—Num. 6:6-7, 9; 2 Cor. 5:4; Rom. 5:17; 8:6, 11.
  5. Our will must be subdued and resurrected by Christ to be like the tower of David, the armory for spiritual warfare—S. S. 4:4; cf. 1 Chron. 11:22.
- C. The inoculator is an athlete—2 Tim. 2:5:
1. We must run the Christian race until we finish our course, fully accomplishing our ministry in the unique ministry of God's economy so that we may receive Christ as our prize—1 Cor. 9:24-25.
  2. We must subdue our body and make it a conquered captive to serve us as a slave for fulfilling our holy purpose, not by our own effort but by the Spirit—vv. 26-27; Rom. 8:13.
  3. We must live the normal church life by pursuing Christ as righteousness, faith, love, and peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart—2 Tim. 2:22.
- D. The inoculator is a farmer—v. 6:
1. The church is God's farm, God's cultivated land, and we are God's fellow workers, working together with Him by an all-fitting life to sow the seed of life into people and water them with the Spirit of life by His healthy words—1 Cor. 3:6, 9; 2 Cor. 6:1a; Luke 8:11; John 7:38; 6:63; 2 Cor. 3:6:
    - a. The word of God, as a grain of wheat, dispenses God as life into us to nourish us; it is also fire

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- and a hammer to purify us and break down our self, our natural life, our flesh, our lusts, and our concepts—Jer. 23:28-29.
- b. God has sent forth His word as rain and snow to water His people in order to sanctify them, transform them, and conform them to His image that the Body may be built up—Isa. 55:8-11; John 17:17; Eph. 5:26.
  2. In our contact with the saints, we should have only one motive—to minister Christ to them that they might grow in the Lord—1 Tim. 5:1-2.
- E. The inoculator is a workman—2 Tim. 2:15:
1. To cut straight the word of the truth means to unfold the word of God in its various parts rightly and straightly without distortion (as in carpentry).
  2. There is the need of the word of the truth rightly unfolded to enlighten the darkened people, inoculate against the poison, swallow up the death, and bring the distracted back to the proper track—cf. Acts 26:18; Psa. 119:130.