

Have we Entered the Last Days?

2 Timothy 3: 1-5

If you record the dates I have preached a particular passage in your Bible, you may notice I preached this text about three years ago. I was aware of that when I prepared this message, and I make no apology for that. I am certain, if the Lord doesn't call for me soon, and allows me to continue preaching, I will deal with this text again. It is a passage that speaks of the current situation we face and the urgency of our day.

Although three years is a relatively short amount of time, I don't think any of us imagined we would have experienced the rapid decline we have seen spiritually and morally in America within that timeframe. Our churches continue their rapid decline. Ideas and activities that are morally and biblically wrong are being promoted and encouraged by those in authority, while long-held biblical and moral standards are being condemned and labeled as out of touch. These are desperate times for America, and the church. Someone must have the courage to sound the alarm in an effort to raise awareness and create a commitment to biblical truth!

The full counsel of God has been displeasing, unacceptable, and even repugnant to self-centered, self-serving, and worldly mankind throughout the ages. But even in the professing church today there is greater confusion, apostasy, moral decay, and tolerance for things that are clearly unscriptural than ever before. Sermons on current issues, selectively using Bible passages that are "relevant" and "positive," are attracting many hearers, including genuine but misled and worldly believers. "The time will come," Paul writes later in this epistle, "when [many in the church] will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires" ([2 Tim. 4:3](#)).ⁱ

I want to examine the [details](#) Paul reveals concerning this difficult day as we consider the question: [Have we Entered the Last Days?](#)

I. The Identification of these Days (1) – [This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.](#) This is a verse we all have heard quoted many times, and yet it bears relevant truth that we must consider. Notice:

A. The Climate – Paul declares that in the last days, [perilous times](#) shall come. *This refers to "difficult, troublesome, trying, uneasy, hard, violent, threatening, and dangerous days." The picture is that of people turning to and fro, here and there, not knowing which way to turn.*ⁱⁱ

- I know every generation has faced its struggles and identified with this verse, but I think you will have to agree that we are in the midst of perilous days. They are certainly trying, difficult and troublesome days. In many circumstances they have become violent and threatening days. When we consider the world scene, we see the rise of radical Islam and the relentless persecution of Christians around the world. We are not yet facing physical persecution, but the attack on conservative Christians in America is increasing. We are seeing the foundations of our faith crumble within society. Those who hold a biblical view of marriage and the home are viewed as bigots and intolerant. The Federal Government is putting political and financial pressure on state governments for passing legislation that promotes biblical and moral principles. We have lost all sanctity for human life. Millions of babies have perished within the safety of their mother's womb. Right is now wrong, and wrong is viewed as right. We are in perilous days!

B. The Context (1) – **This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.** Paul refers to these perilous times appearing in the last days. He is speaking of the final days, leading up to the return of Christ. We have no way of knowing when the Lord will return, but when we consider what the Scriptures reveal about that time, we see that things are certainly lining up for His coming! **1 John 2:18 – Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.** **2 Thes.2:3 – Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.** **Mat.24:37-38 – But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.** ^[38] **For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark.** **Genesis 6:5 – And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.**

C. The Certainty (1) – **This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.** Paul does not refer to a mere possibility. He doesn't speak of events that might happen. He speaks of certainty. We must know that in the last days, perilous times shall come. They cannot be prevented or avoided. God has a timeline established for the second coming of Christ and these things must come to pass. I have no trouble believing we are in the midst of the last days. The return of Christ could happen at any moment!

II. The Corruption in these Days (2-5a) – Here Paul describes the utter corruption and depravity that mark the last days. Consider:

A. The Desire of Men (2-4) – As we look at the desire and actions of mankind in the last days, you will see a resemblance of our day. Notice:

1. Lovers of their own selves – *Selfish; intent only on one's interest.*

2. Covetous – *Loving money and material gain.*

3. Boasters – *Empty Pretenders, bragging about their accomplishments with no recognition or regard for others, being their own man.*

4. Proud – *Showing one's self above others; literally despising others and treating them with contempt or hatred.*

5. Blasphemers – *Speaking evil; slanderous; reproachful; evil.* These are defiant to the Word, the work, and the witness of God.

6. Disobedient to Parents – We are seeing the most rebellious generation known to man. There is no respect for authority at all.

7. Unthankful – *Ungracious for anything.* We are blessed beyond measure and yet most never acknowledge any gratitude. Most feel they have earned and deserve more blessing!

8. Unholy – *Wicked and profane.* (Illus. the condition of society.)

9. Without Natural Affection – This has the idea of a *breakdown within the home.* The natural affections are absent, (abortion, incest, sodomy, etc.)

10. Trucebreakers – *Hostile; no desire to live peaceably; those who must have their own way regardless of the cost or obligation to others.*

11. False Accusers – *Slanderer; those who attack the reputation of others.* This comes from the Greek word *diabolos*, from which we get our word devil. These are the devil's advocates.

12. Incontinent – *One who lives without self-control or restraint.* (Society)

13. Fierce – *Savage; unable to be tamed.*

14. Despisers of those that are Good – *Opposed to goodness, godliness, those of the faith.*

15. Traitors – *Betrayers.* No loyalty except to themselves.

16. Heady – *“Falling headlong,” rash, reckless.*

17. Highminded – *“To raise a smoke,” proud; puffed up; filled with conceit.*

B. The Display of Men (5a) – *Having a form of godliness.* Would you not agree that we are seeing this fulfilled in our day? Many want to wear religion on their sleeve, but it is just a façade, a pretentious form that does not exist.

- The church is filled with those who attend services on Sunday, but live like the world throughout the week. There has been no change in their lives; they are simply going through a form that is void of any depth or meaning. There is no sincerity. Hell will be filled with religious people who only possessed a form of godliness. If it doesn't remain on Monday, you are lacking!

C. The Denial of Men (5a) – *but denying the power thereof.* These are those with no spiritual depth, filled with unbelief and rebellion. They do not expect God to do anything among them and even deny that He still has the power to do so.

- The modern church is there in our day. We have the mechanics of worship down to a science. We have our programs and preferences, but we have lost our power. The church is becoming an empty shell.

- To the world there is a form of godliness, but there is no power in our day. We live in an age where lost folks can attend services on a regular basis and never feel any conviction. The average Christian has no testimony or witness because they have no power. Attending a worship service is more of a social experience than a spiritual one. Many feel as if they have done their good deed for the week, but there is no transforming power in their lives!

III. The Reaction to the Last Days (5b) – *from such turn away.* We may be living in the last days, but we must press on for the glory of God. Here Paul leaves instruction for the believer who is living in the last days. That instruction involves:

A. Our Recognition – *from such turn away.* We must get to the place that we are able to recognize what is real and what is counterfeit. The average church member doesn't have enough spiritual discernment to know the difference. We must be able to identify the hindrances of our day. We must be close enough to the Lord to sense His direction and calling.

- A man can carry a Bible, stand behind a pulpit and preach, but that doesn't guarantee he is called of God. Every church that has Baptist written on their sign is not filled with the Spirit and living for the Lord. Every person who claims to be a Christian has not met the Lord in salvation. We are responsible to know the difference.
- This will be a difficult task for those who are complacent and apathetic to the needs of our day. If we are to know what is real and what is not, we must have God on us and in our lives!

B. Our Separation (5b) – **from such turn away**. These are strong words, but they are given for our good. The word **turn** means *to shun and avoid*. This is not a mere suggestion, but a command of God. I know that we must live among the world and we are to be a witness to the world, but we must not embrace the world. We are commanded to come out from among them and be a separate people. We cannot embrace the ideals nor submit to the demands of our society.

- Instead of the church being an influence among the world, the world has become the influence among the church. Many have lowered their standards and abandoned the ways of God to please the world. Many have made the church like the world in order to attract a crowd.
- We could have all the people in the community attending, but if we have not separated ourselves and have the power of God in the midst, then it will be nothing more than a social gathering. It is time for the church to turn away from the ways of the world and seek the ways of God. If you are genuinely concerned about the lost, that is the only way to reach them. If we are simply offering what they are getting in the world, there will be no difference.

Conclusion: The words Paul shared within the text closely resemble the day in which we live. One thing is certain – we are nearer the Lord's return than ever before. These days will not improve. They will wax worse and worse before the Lord comes.

We must stand for truth in these perilous days, but that requires the help and guidance of the Spirit. If you are struggling while living in these difficult days, come and seek the strength that comes from the Lord. If you are unsaved, I urge you to come to Christ by faith today. He is coming again, and only those who have received Him as their personal Savior will be granted access to heaven. The world is deceived and headed toward hell. Come while there is time and opportunity!

ⁱ MacArthur New Testament Commentary, The - MacArthur New Testament Commentary – 2 Timothy.

ⁱⁱ Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible - Commentary - The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon.