

TTS Scripture S8 – 2 Tim 2:14-26

¹⁴ Remind them of this, and warn them before God that they are to avoid wrangling over words, which does no good but only ruins those who are listening. ¹⁵ Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved by him, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth. ¹⁶ Avoid profane chatter, for it will lead people into more and more impiety, ¹⁷ and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, ¹⁸ who have swerved from the truth by claiming that the resurrection has already taken place. They are upsetting the faith of some. ¹⁹ But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this inscription: 'The Lord knows those who are his', and, 'Let everyone who calls on the name of the Lord turn away from wickedness.'

²⁰ In a large house there are utensils not only of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for special use, some for ordinary. ²¹ All who cleanse themselves of the things I have mentioned will become special utensils, dedicated and useful to the owner of the house, ready for every good work. ²² Shun youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. ²³ Have nothing to do with stupid and senseless controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. ²⁴ And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kindly to everyone, an apt teacher, patient, ²⁵ correcting opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant that they will repent and come to know the truth, ²⁶ and that they may escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will. [2 Tim 2:14-26]

"Remind them of this" [v.14]

- **Calvin's Commentary:**
 - "Remind them of these things. The expression (ταῦτα) these things, is highly emphatic. It means that the summary of the gospel which he gave, and the exhortations which he added to it, are of so great importance, that a good minister ought never to be weary of exhibiting them; for they are things that deserve to be continually handled, and that cannot be too frequently repeated. "They are things (he says) which I wish you not only to teach once, but to take great pains to impress on the hearts of men by frequent repetition." A good teacher ought to look at nothing else than edification, and to give his whole attention to that alone."

“Rightly explaining / dividing the word of truth” [v.15]

- Calvin’s Commentary:
 - We shall find fanatics who think that it is a loss of time to come to the church to be taught. 'What? Is not all the doctrine of God contained in the Bible? What more can be said on the subject?' It is making them little children (they will say) to come here to be taught; but grown people may dispense with it. What? Must there be all this preaching? There are but two points in Scripture, that we ought to love God and to love our neighbor. We have not heard these things merely from those who come to relate them; but the most distinguished scholars of those who vomited out these blasphemies have themselves declared them to us. I could name the day when it was said, and the houses, and the hour, and the people who were present, and how wicked men poured out their venom and their passion against God, to overthrow and destroy all religion, if it were possible; that is but too well known. On the contrary, Paul shews us here, that if we have only the Holy Scripture, it is not enough that each of us read it in private, but the doctrine drawn from it must be preached to us in order that we may be well informed”
 - “By this term I understand, generally, an allotment of the word which is judicious, and which is well suited to the profit of the hearers. Some mutilate it, others tear it, others torture it, others break it in pieces, others, keeping by the outside, (as we have said,) never come to the soul of doctrine.”

“Their talk will spread like gangrene” [v.17]

- Matthew Henry’s Commentary:
 - “Their word will eat as doth a canker, or gangrene; when errors or heresies come into the church, the infecting of one often proves the infecting of many, or the infecting of the same person with one error often proves the infecting of him with many errors.”

“Shun youthful passions” [v.22]

- Calvin’s Commentary:
 - “By this term he does not mean either a propensity to uncleanness, or any of those licentious courses or sinful lusts in which young men frequently indulge, but any impetuous passions to which the excessive warmth of that age is prone. If some debate has arisen, young men more quickly grow warm, are more easily irritated, more frequently blunder through want of experience, and rush forward with greater confidence and rashness, than men of riper age. With good reason, therefore, does Paul advise Timothy, being a young man, to be strictly on his guard against the vices of youth, which otherwise might easily drive him to useless disputes.”
- Matthew Henry’s Commentary:
 - “The exciting of our graces will be the extinguishing of our corruptions; the more we follow that which is good the faster and the further we shall flee from that which is evil.”

“The Lord’s servant must [be] kindly to everyone” [v.24]

- Calvin’s Commentary:
 - “When he says, that we must be “gentle towards all, “he means that we ought to be easy and affable in receiving all who come to be taught in the gospel, for if we do not give them access it is like shutting the door against them, so that they shall never have it in their power to approach to God. We must, therefore, have that mildness and humanity dwelling in us, so as to be ready to receive all who wish to be instructed. And therefore, he adds, that we must be ‘qualified for teaching,’ as if he had said, that those things are connected with each other, gentleness and skill in teaching. The reason is, if a man be fierce and inaccessible, it will never be possible for us to receive instruction from him. He who wishes to be a good teacher must conduct himself with civility, and must have some way of drawing those who come to him, so as to gain their affections; and that cannot be, unless he have that ‘gentleness’ of which Paul speaks. Thus we see how he intended to confirm what

he had briefly stated, that a man who is quarrelsome, and addicted to disputes and contentions, is in no degree a servant of God. And why? As servants of God, must we not labor to gain poor ignorant persons? And that cannot be, unless we are mild, unless we hear patiently what they say, unless we bear with their weakness, until by little and little they are edified. If we have not that, it is like casting them off”

- “Patient to the bad. The importunity of some men may sometimes produce either irritation or weariness; and for that reason he adds, "bearing with them," at the same time pointing out the reason why it is necessary; namely, because a godly teacher ought even to try whether it be possible for him to bring back to the right path obstinate and rebellious persons, which cannot be done without the exercise of gentleness.”
- Matthew Henry’s Commentary:
 - “That which ministers must have in their eyes, in instructing those who oppose themselves, must be their recovery: If God, peradventure, will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth”

“God may perhaps grant that they will repent” [v.25]

- Calvin’s Commentary:
 - “For the same reason he mentions that "God will grant it." Since the conversion of a man is in the hand of God, who knows whether they who today appear to be unteachable shall be suddenly changed by the power of God, into other men? Thus, whoever shall consider that repentance is the gift and work of God, will cherish more earnest hope, and, encouraged by this confidence, will bestow more toil and exertion for the instruction of rebels. We should view it thus, that our duty is, to be employed in sowing and watering, and, while we do this, we must look for the increase from God. (1 Corinthians 3:6.) Our labours and exertions are thus of no advantage in themselves; and yet, through the grace of God, they are not fruitless.”

- “To the knowledge of the truth. We may learn from this what is the actual repentance of those who for a time were disobedient to God; for Paul declares that it begins with “the knowledge of the truth.” By this he means that the understanding of man is blinded, so long as it stands out fiercely against God and his doctrine.”

“They may escape from the snare of the devil” [v.26]

- Calvin’s Commentary:
 - “By whom they are held captive. A truly shocking condition, when the devil has so great power over us, that he drags us, as captive slaves, here and there at his pleasure. Yet such is the condition of all those whom the pride of their heart draws away from subjection to God. And this tyrannical dominion of Satan we see plainly, every day, in the reprobate; for they would not rush with such fury and with brutal violence into every kind of base and disgraceful crimes, if they were not drawn by the unseen power of Satan. That is what we saw at Ephesians 2:2, that, Satan exerts his energy in unbelievers. Such examples admonish us to keep ourselves carefully under the yoke of Christ, and to yield ourselves to be governed by his Holy Spirit. And yet a captivity of this nature does not excuse wicked men, so that they do not sin, because it is by the instigation of Satan that they sin; for, although their being carried along so resistlessly to that which is evil proceeds from the dominion of Satan, yet they do nothing by constraint, but are inclined with their whole heart to that to which Satan drives them. The result is, that their captivity is voluntary.”
- Recover themselves:
 - (CWSB Dictionary) 366. *ἀνανήφω ananéphō*; fut. *ananépsō*, from *aná* (G0303), again, and *néphō* (G3525), to be sober. To awake out of a drunken sleep and become sober, to become sober (2 Tim. 2:26).
 - This word may refer to a practice in which sowers scattered seeds impregnated with drugs intended to

put birds to sleep that a net might be drawn over them to capture them.

- Syn.: *egkrateúomai* (G1467), to exercise self-restraint; *nēsteúō* (G3522), to fast; *elégchō* (G1651), to check; *chalinagōgēō* (G5468), to bridle; *damázō* (G1150), to tame; *katastéllō* (G2687), to put down; *apéchō* (G0568), to abstain; *sōphronéō* (G4993), to exercise a sound mind, to be sober-minded, exercise self-control.
- Ant.: *ataktéō* (G0812), behave in a disorderly manner; *paralúō* (G3886), to enfeeble; *methúskō* (G3182), to be drunk; *methúō* (G3184), to get drunk; *euthuméō* (G2114), to be merry.

Fiona's Notes (from the Ref Now Conference) on vv.24-25

“Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness”
[Titus 1:1]

Re the Puritans: They understood, that truth, acknowledged and applied, leads to godliness. Godliness, or piety, which was one of Calvin's major themes, “designates the right heart-attitude of man toward God, including true knowledge, heartfelt worship, saving faith, filial fear, prayerful submission, and reverential love.” (Joel Beeke).

The word here for ‘knowledge’ in the Greek is ‘epignosis’.

Complete Word Study Bible: Strongs 1922. “ *ἐπίγνωσις* epígnōsis; gen. epígnōseōs, fem. noun from epiginōskō (G1921), to recognize. It is more intens. than gnōsis (G1108), knowledge, because it expresses a more thorough participation in the acquiring of knowledge on the part of the learner. It often refers to knowledge which very powerfully influences the form of religious life, a knowledge laying claim to personal involvement. ...The insight obtained by penetrating knowledge, going down to the foundation.”

It is a knowledge that motivates to action:

Paul describes the beautiful synergy of the Holy Spirit's gracious work of sanctifying the children of God in Philippians:

- *“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure” [Phil 2:12-13]*

We are to ‘work out’ that which God works within. How does God work within us, in such a way that His will is worked out in us? The answer, in my view, is in this word ‘*epignosis*’, by the Holy Spirit revealing to us the ‘knowledge’ of God, primarily through the Word of God, which we then walk in.

As we saw from J I Packer earlier, these were men who knew: “the authority not just of Scripture itself, as the Word of God, but of Scripture in experience – their own experience – as the power of God, through what they recognised as the illuminating and applying agency of the Holy Spirit”.

This is the essence of ‘*epignosis*’, the truth that leads to godliness, it is the Holy Spirit, both illuminating and applying the Word of God to our hearts and lives. As the Puritans said: “Truth obeyed will heal”, will heal the spiritual sickness of sin and bring us into a righteous walk of faith and obedience.