

## 2 Timothy 2B

- I trust you had opportunity over the past week to reflect on the analogies Paul provided last week
  - Paul compared our walk in Christ to that of a soldier, athlete and farmer
    - Each of those analogies drove home a key point
    - Soldiers are committed to serving well at the sacrifice of everyday concerns and in spite of the expectation of danger
    - Athletes compete earnestly and according to the rules so they may obtain a prize at the end
    - Farmers demonstrate persistence and patience in the face of difficult work knowing that they only obtain a reward at the end
  - Paul taught that all three analogies apply to our lives as Christians
    - We too are called to serve Christ sacrificially in spite of persecution
    - We also compete for a prize, so we set our mind on observing the commandments of our Lord
    - And like a farmer, we understand the work will be hard, and the reward appears only after the season of our earthly life ends
  - Therefore, Paul concluded, we suffer hardship and persecution gladly, because it is a testing of our endurance and an opportunity for reward
    - We won't always pass these tests with flying colors
    - Sometimes we will stumble, shrink back, feel like giving up
    - But the Lord will grant us grace to stand strong if only we will embrace the trial
- Of course, not all believers take this path
  - Some go in other directions, so now Paul moves to giving instructions to Timothy concerning this wayward crowd
    - Paul bridged into this discussion last week by quoting a trustworthy statement

- Paul repeated a hymn or creed of the early church, assigning it the weight of scripture
- The creed affirmed several important theological principles
- First, v.11 succinctly summarizes the Gospel of salvation by faith in Christ
  - If we have faith in Christ, then we will share in his eternal life
  - Then in v.12, the saying proceeded from faith to good works
  - By enduring in serving Christ through good works, we will see a reward of reigning with Christ in the Kingdom
- But then the saying turned decidedly negative
  - In the second half of v.12, we're reminded that those who deny Christ their service will likewise be denied their rewards
  - The word "deny" sounds so strong it can lead us to assuming (incorrectly) that Paul is speaking about a severing of our relationship with Christ
  - Of course, this isn't even possible, since every believer is eternally secure in their relationship with Christ
- Moreover, the final verse of this creed (v.13) clarifies that was not the intended meaning of the saying
  - Even if we are faithless in our relationship with Christ, the Lord sticks with us to the end
  - Faithlessness in this context means a failure to live according to our confession
  - To live disobediently, as a prodigal son or daughter, even to the point of apostasy
  - Nothing can separate us from the love of God, yet these choices still carry consequences
- Paul gave Timothy this summary expecting Timothy to share it with the congregation in Ephesus, as Paul says next:

**2Tim. 2:14 Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers.**

[2Tim. 2:15](#) Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

[2Tim. 2:16](#) But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness,

[2Tim. 2:17](#) and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus,

[2Tim. 2:18](#) men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some.

[2Tim. 2:19](#) Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness."

- Earlier in this chapter, Paul asked Timothy to take the things he heard from Paul, entrust them to faithful men and expect them to teach others
  - For Paul, teaching was the solution to apostasy
    - As persecution grew and pressure increased upon the church, the church body needed the Word of God to lend it fortitude
    - The Word of God is power to the believer, both for the knowledge it imparts and for the spiritual strength it provides
    - The Word explains why God allows persecution
    - It offers rationale for persevering through it
    - And it brings hope for glory and the promise of reward for those who suffer in it
  - But when the church lacks the Word of God, it leaves a vacuum
    - And as someone once observed, nature abhors a vacuum
    - Something will fill that empty void
  - Therefore, if a pastor neglects to provide the Word of God, to train up a congregation in spiritual truth, then others will step in to do that job
    - In particular, the enemy will happily fill that vacuum
    - Only he won't be serving up the Word of God
    - He serves up lies, through he'll dress them up to look good
- Paul tells Timothy this is exactly what was happening in Ephesus

- In v.14 he tells Timothy to remind them of these things
  - “These things” refers to the principles summed up in the trustworthy statement
  - Reading between the lines a little, it seems that the church wasn’t handling persecution well
  - And I said earlier it seems Timothy was on the brink of following after other leaders who abandoned Paul during this time of persecution
- Now I assume from Paul’s words that Timothy may have neglected or overlooked the need to teach doctrine to Ephesus’ impressionable believers
  - If they didn’t know that they were saved entirely by faith, then they may have worried unnecessarily about their eternal security
  - If they didn’t understand that works brought opportunity for reward, then they may have felt there was no advantage in maintaining their witness in the face of persecution
  - And if they didn’t understand God’s desire to test our faith through persecution, they might propose novel, unbiblical explanations for such events
- These things were happening in varying degrees in Ephesus, and Paul wants Timothy to put an end to it through proper teaching of correct doctrine
  - Moreover, Paul asks Timothy to solemnly charge them (or declare with godly authority) to stop useless arguing about false things
    - The English translation says they must not wrangle about words
    - In Greek it literally translates as fight about words
    - Paul’s describing arguments that center on meanings of words, probably taken out of the Old Testament
    - Or perhaps even from Paul’s teaching
  - These kind of disputes are ever-present among the untaught or poorly taught within the church
    - Ironically, most true biblical scholars shy away from such arguments

- Because they know them to be “red herrings”
- Such disputes are usually not the main issue, nor do they illuminate the main issue
- They are distractions at best, and at worst they are a subterfuge
- Like a pickpocket who distracts you while taking your wallet through slight-of-hand
- Paul says such arguments are useless and lead to the ruin of the hearers
  - They serve no useful purpose
    - They don't lead us to truth
    - They don't build our faith in Christ
    - They don't grow our walk or encourage us to put away sin
    - They are useless spiritually
  - For this reason, they lead to the ruin of hearers, literally the destruction of hearers
    - How are believers “destroyed” by these useless debates?
    - Paul's referring to their walk, their spiritual progression
    - Instead of pursuing true spiritual knowledge, they pursue the curious, the provocative, the sensational teachings of false teachers
    - Instead of focusing on serving Christ by preaching the Gospel, they use their time to promote strange ideas
    - Instead of moving into the main stream of spiritual maturity, they get caught in stagnant eddies where they stop moving and growing
  - You can see this happening today as it did in Timothy's day
    - You can find believers investing meaningful time and energy debating the shape of the earth
    - The correct Sabbath day
    - The proper secret name with which to address Jesus

- And many other useless disputes about words
- If you get sucked into these discussions, take note that the arguments are not a seeking of spiritual truth by which we may know and serve Christ in greater ways
  - They are always distractions away from those goals
  - As R.W. Ward once observed,

**"In the end disputing about words seeks not the victory of truth but the victory of the speaker."**

- The whole exercise smacks of ego and pride
- It feels like someone trying to prove a ridiculous assertion to win a bar bet
- But when true biblical instruction falls by the wayside, the enemy is ready to fill that void with this kind of nonsense, because it is destructive to the spiritual growth of believers
  - The believer whose spiritual diet consists of this kind of junk food will be the first to fall away in times of trial
    - Whether because of persecution or merely personal temptations, these are the ones who run first
    - They are seeking tickling of ears, so when the pleasure stops, so do they
  - Naturally, the antidote for such things is that the church receive sound teaching
    - So Paul tells Timothy in v.15 to do his job
    - Specifically, Paul asks Timothy to be diligent to present himself to God as a workman approved and not ashamed as he teaches the Word
    - The Greek word translated "accurately handling" simply means to use something correctly
    - The ultimate, and only, goal of every Bible teacher is to use the Word of God correctly
  - That's the essential difference between false teaching and true teaching

- Sometimes in the course of teaching we do need to focus down on individual words and consider their meaning carefully
- And other times, an emphasis on words is useless and brings ruin
- The difference is whether we are using the text correctly
- For example, some false teachers say the phrase “call upon the name of the Lord” is referencing some unique, secret name of Christ
  - They teach we must know and use that secret name (and only that name) if we want to be saved
  - This teaching about words isn’t communicating the correct meaning of the text
  - The Bible emphasizes the importance of “calling” – not on some specific “name”
  - Regardless of which name of Jesus we know and use, the point is we have called Him our Savior and placed our faith in Him
  - This is an example of wrangling over words in a useless way
- Paul said Timothy must be diligent to be a worker who uses scripture correctly
  - The words diligent and worker make clear this is a process of effort, not talent
  - Handling the Word of God correctly isn’t a gift; it’s a practice
  - Everyone, especially pastors, must work hard to handle the Word properly
  - There will be no excuse for shoddy workmanship among those who seek to learn and teach the scriptures
- Paul alludes to the risks when he says Timothy must present himself before God on this matter
  - Paul is alluding to Timothy’s moment before the Judgment Seat of Christ
  - The Greek word for “present” is the word for stand
  - So Paul’s reminding Timothy he must stand before Christ some day to come and give an account for how he taught

- And at the moment, Timothy will wish to be judged as one who worked hard to teach the Word properly
- Rather than as one who wrangled over useless words, as some were doing in Ephesus, which will bring shame at the judgment
- Remember James says that teachers will face a tougher judgment for this reason
- So what are we to do when confronted by such nonsense in the church?
  - Paul tells Timothy in v.16 to avoid such empty, foolish talk
    - As I've mentioned before, Paul doesn't say debate or challenge or even consider their arguments
    - He says to avoid them altogether
    - Give no time or attention to their teaching
    - Rebuke them to stay silent and to repent of such false teaching
    - But after this, have nothing more to do with them so long as they teach in this way
  - Engaging in debates with people who want to promote useless speculation rather than the self-evident truth of scripture is counter-productive
    - Paul says it leads to further ungodliness
    - The Greek word for "lead" can also be translated "progress"
    - Therefore, we could say that while these men were teaching progressive interpretations of scripture
    - They only served to progress ungodliness
    - And Paul says avoid them because to entertain such empty talk can only make matters worse
  - Entering into debates with those who promote nonsense of one kind or another promotes ungodliness in three ways
    - First, it lends legitimacy to the false teachers
    - When respected teachers give equal time to charlatans, we elevate them at the expense of our legitimacy

- Secondly, debating false teachers suggests to Bible students that the question the false teachers raise is open to debate, or that the truth of the matter is in question
  - False teachers always begin with a settled truth of scripture (like what “call upon the name of the Lord” means)
    - Or with some common-sense understanding (like the shape of the earth)
    - And then proclaim they have a new and novel view that disrupts the status quo
  - For example, we recently received an email to the ministry that read:

**I have been reading a lot of stuff about the flat earth theory, and stories relating to Enoch and Angel Uriel, that we have been deceived in many ways about the true shape of the earth.**

- Notice this person was receiving teaching from false, unbiblical sources (Enoch, and Angel Uriel) and giving it equal weight to credible sources
- And he was attracted to it because it challenged orthodoxy and fed a conspiracy narrative (“We’ve been lied to!”)
- Such false teaching always implies there is a great deception afoot, which is seductive and exciting to untrained ears
- This is useless teaching which distracted this person away from pursuing meaningful spiritual truth
- Why give this sort of thing even more traction?
  - When we debate it, we help raise the very question that there is something still to resolve
  - It’s like the question, “Do you still beat your wife?”
  - The question itself makes a statement
- Paul says it will spread like gangrene
  - Gangrene was the ancient term for any sore in the flesh that wouldn’t heal
  - Paul is describing the way this teaching eats at the body, destroying the walk and progression of believers

- Thirdly, it underestimates the skill of the enemy, since we enter the debate assuming we will win the argument in the end
  - The enemy is crafty, and no less so when he speaks through false teachers
    - Just because truth is on our side doesn't mean we won't fall
    - It happened to Woman in the Garden and it can happen to us too
  - For all three reasons, Bible teachers and pastor should never agree to debate those who hold such unbiblical views of scripture
    - Instead, we should obey scripture when it commands us to avoid such people
    - Don't play with fire; you get burned
  - Paul mentions two such believers who apparently got involved in such disputes
    - Hymenaeus and Philetus were members of the church in Ephesus perhaps under Timothy's charge
    - If so, then mentioning them by name might have been Paul's not-so-subtle way of reminding Timothy of the dangers in his own church
    - They were involved in a dispute over the timing of the resurrection of the church
- The resurrection moment of the church is often called by another name today, the Rapture
  - It's a common source of dispute today (unnecessarily, since scripture is so clear on it)
    - And now we see that disputes over this event have always been around
    - The enemy has always recognized the strategic value of undermining a Christian's understanding of, and confidence in, the promise of our resurrection
  - Our resurrection is the single most important moment in the life of any saint

- Our resurrection is the moment we receive the promised eternal life we gain by faith in Christ
- It is our hope in Christ
- The word hope in the Bible is a reference to our hope of living again eternally with Christ
- So our hope in Christ is all about us rising from the grave never to die again
- These men in Ephesus maintained that the resurrection had already happened, which means those saints on earth were not included
  - Who knows how they explained this but regardless, Paul says this teaching was upsetting the faith of some
  - We can understand why this would be so
  - If I believe I missed the resurrection, then I would have little reason to persist in my faith
  - This would be especially true if I was facing persecution for my faith
- In fact, the Greek word translated “upset” in v.18 is literally translated “overthrow”
  - These men were causing believers to drop the practice of their faith
  - And to lose hope in Christ’s promises
  - And this disruption came merely because these men wrangled with certain words bringing confusion and doubt
- Paul gives a short and simple counter to their false teaching in v.19
  - He says the testimony of the Word, which he calls the firm foundation of God, will stand or remain despite such men
    - Paul then quotes from two OT passages
    - These statements are the “seal” Paul says
    - He’s referring to the way an architect or builder would inscribe his personal mark or seal on the foundation of a building
    - The seal identified the builder’s work

- Similarly, the word of God declares that believers are marked or sealed to identify our Builder
  - First, Paul quotes from probably Numbers 16:5 to say the Lord knows who are His
  - This is a statement of assurance to the believer
  - No matter what is taught and no matter who may be drawn astray by it, the Lord knows who are His children
- And we can be sure He will not forget us or fail to fulfill His promises to us
  - Even those who had been upset by these men and may have abandoned their walk with Christ, even these would be resurrected one day
  - Ironically, they will be surprised to see the promise fulfilled
  - When they could have been strengthened by hope
- If these two men had understood the Word of God (rather than investing time in nonsense and useless arguments) they could have known these things too
  - They could have seen the assurance of God's promises not to forget any who are His
    - With that assurance comes sufficient knowledge to refute stupid claims that the resurrection had already come
    - Clearly, if the promised gathering of God's people had come already, then all who are His would have known it
    - Therefore, a sensible, biblically-educated person can safely conclude that teaching to the contrary is wrong
  - This is how study of scripture prepares us to handle false teaching
    - We won't gain a specific response to every false teaching
    - That's not possible given the infinite number of ways lies can be constructed
  - Instead, the more you know Christ and His plans and His character from scripture, then the better you will be at spotting false or useless teaching

- And that's enough to reject it
- To have nothing to do with it
- It's like trying to identify counterfeit currency
- We don't study counterfeits; we study the real thing so that we know when we see something false
- That's why Paul quotes the second verse taken from Isa 52:11 probably
  - The Lord declares that "everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness"
  - When we can identify something that's false, we don't need to tangle with it or try to fix it
  - We need to avoid it, to abstain from wickedness
- **Addendum:** The cross-references from 2 Tim. 2:19 may appear different to modern day translations of the Old Testament, as Paul would have been quoting from the Septuagint (Old Greek translation of the OT). He would also have used a rabbinical interpretative method, called Remez, which takes both a literal and allegorical approach.
- Study of scripture will prepare us to spot wickedness, and a desire to please the Lord will lead us to steer clear of it
  - But if our egos get the better of us, we may decide we are going to challenge and defeat the false teaching face-to-face
  - Or if we are weak in our study of scripture, we may not recognize the errors at all and become a victim of it
- Since Paul has asked Timothy to remind the church of these things and to teach them properly in the Word, Paul offers his fourth metaphor to encourage obedience to his instructions:

**2Tim. 2:20** Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor.

**2Tim. 2:21** Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.

- To understand this analogy properly, we need to keep it in the context of believers led astray by false teaching into a useless, destructive walk of faith

- Secondly, we need to assign proper meaning to each detail in the analogy
  - Starting with the large house
  - In scripture, houses are always pictures or euphemisms for families or groups
  - Notably, the people of God are called “houses” in scripture
  - And the Church is specifically called a house in Hebrews, and the master of that house is Christ
- It’s a large house because it includes all believers over the entire period of the Church, which surely must be millions if not billions of believers
  - In this house (that is, in the church), we find gold and silver vessels
  - These are pots used to serve food and probably only at special occasions
  - Think of them as fine china
- But in this house are also vessels of earthenware and wood
  - These are vessels for common use
  - And in fact, some were used as toilets in the home
- All these vessels are part of the owner or master’s house, yet there are obvious distinctions between them
  - In the metaphor, the distinctions are quite severe
  - Paul intended this stark contrast to make sure we didn’t miss the distinction
  - But it doesn’t require that we apply an equally strong distinction when interpreting the metaphor
  - In other words, even the dishonorable vessels are believers
- We see this clearly because in v.21 the vessels are called to “cleanse” themselves
  - The word in Greek means to clean out, to empty itself of the filthy material

- Clearly, this isn't describing coming to faith, because the cleaning out is done by the vessel itself, not by the Master
- If we were talking about unbelievers becoming believers, then the metaphor suggests a works-based Gospel
- This is different than the vessels analogy Paul uses in Romans 9, where God creates vessels in a certain way from the beginning
- Instead, in this analogy Paul is describing the honor and dishonor of different members of the body of Christ
  - That honor, or lack thereof, is determined by whether we clear out the things that dishonor us in God's eyes
    - A believer is called to come out from wickedness
    - To stand out in our witness, to separate ourselves from the world
    - And to separate ourselves from false teaching and those who promote it
  - As we do this, we serve the purposes of the Church
    - We witness to the truth
    - We honor and please Christ
  - But of course, we will also raise our profile in the world, leading to greater persecution
    - That was the dilemma in Ephesus for Timothy and the rest of the church
    - Do what God requires, be honored at the judgment, and receive reward
    - Or shrink back, blend in, avoid persecution and yet be filled with dishonor
  - Paul says there were consequences for these choices
    - In particular, Paul says that the vessels that preserve their honor were sanctified and useful to the Master
    - They were prepared for every good work
    - They were ready to serve and therefore they would serve and be rewarded for that service

- What prepared them for this opportunity? The renewing of their minds through the Word of God
  - As they began to understand biblical truth, they could discern false things so as to avoid them
  - They could then walk in the truth confidently unshaken by persecution or false teaching
  - And they will be rewarded one day
- This leads Paul into a series of direct exhortations to Timothy for how to handle the present situation in Ephesus

**2Tim. 2:22** Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

**2Tim. 2:23** But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels.

**2Tim. 2:24** The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged,

**2Tim. 2:25** with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,

**2Tim. 2:26** and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

- You can see this passage as a summary of the first two chapters, because it wraps up Paul's major ideas expressed so far in the letter
  - First, Paul asks Timothy to flee youthful lusts
    - We know Timothy was a younger man
    - And young men have lusts that older men generally lack
    - While sexual lusts are obvious, I don't think that's what Paul was principally concerned about in Timothy's case
    - Since there has been no indication of that concern thus far
  - More likely, the youthful lusts Timothy knew was that of ambition, public acceptance or financial accumulation
    - These things could have been responsible for pulling Timothy away from a strong stand with Paul

- Paul says flee these things, literally run from them
- And pursue (or run after) righteousness, faith, love and peace
- Each of these words is important but Paul uses them here in a collective sense
  - Together they represent the true sanctification his analogy mentioned
  - True spiritual maturity and strength is living in righteousness, faith, love and peace
  - Despite persecution, deprivation or rejection, a mature Christian has these qualities born out of a close walk with Christ through His Word
  - They are evidence of a pure heart, Paul says, among all those who call upon the name of the Lord
- As Timothy pursued these things, he must also refuse (or not answer) those who engage in foolish and ignorant speculation (like those we discussed)
  - Here again, the standard is to avoid such people and not to engage with them
    - Paul reiterates that we refuse them because they are seeking to start a quarrel
    - There can be no good spiritual purpose in proposing that the Earth is flat or that the name Jesus isn't the proper name of Christ, except to start an argument
  - But those who seek to serve the Lord as His bondservant cannot be known as a quarrelsome person
    - The Greek word for quarrelsome can be translated to contradict
    - We must not become one who makes a pattern of contradicting those who speak nonsense
    - Literally, Timothy's spiritual job description precluded him from engaging in such debates
- Instead, a pastor must be kind to all, able to teach and patient when wronged, correcting those in opposition in gentleness

- This is Paul's recipe for how a pastor must approach situations where empty talk and silly notions are being spread in place of sound biblical instruction
  - First, be kind to all
  - Being rude to a false teacher has no value
  - It's unlikely to win him over, and it only makes you look bad too
- Secondly, the pastor must be able to teach on the point if they hope to set the person straight
  - Obviously, teaching implies a student willing to learn
  - So Paul's not contradicting himself earlier when he said flee and avoid such people
  - He's merely stating the obvious, that if we have the potential to help such a person, we must possess sufficient knowledge to correct the fact
- Thirdly, patience when wronged is a prerequisite for pastoral service, especially when working to correct false notions in the body
  - If a pastor stormed off in a huff anytime someone spoke an unkind word or took offense, they would be very lonely
  - Pastors must maintain a perspective that people are their sheep
  - And therefore, they are shepherds leading people, not driving them from behind
  - Show patience in the hope that continuing the engagement may lead somewhere good
- Finally, the job inevitably includes correcting those in opposition
  - The goal isn't to make or keep friends or find "common ground"
  - The goal is to correct
  - To set those who are opposing the truth on a course aligned with the truth
  - You don't want to hurt feelings, but you can't be afraid of hurting feelings

- If a pastor approaches the correction of useless speculation and other false teaching in this way, he stands the chance of winning them over
  - But Paul says only if the Lord may grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth
    - Again, we're talking about believers
    - So consider what Paul just revealed...that even the knowledge of biblical truth depends on the Lord
  - If we become enamored with false teaching, then we are taking a risk
    - The risk is that the Lord may not grant us the repentance we need to come to our senses
    - He may elect to leave us where our pride or ego or ignorance took us
    - If we are not diligent to study *and* follow scripture, we may stumble into a pit of false teaching
    - And the Lord may or may not drop a rope down so we can escape
  - The writer of Hebrews says something similar

**Heb. 5:12** For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

**Heb. 5:13** For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant.

**Heb. 5:14** But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

**Heb. 6:1** Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

**Heb. 6:2** of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.

**Heb. 6:3** And this we will do, if God permits.

- Those who do not know the Word of God can't discern good from evil

- And this leaves them susceptible to the enemy's lies and the sin that he provokes in us
- If we allow ourselves to descend to this point, we will escape the snare of the devil only if the Lord brings us to our senses, Paul says
  - Ultimately, the devil is the one behind these schemes of false teaching and useless, distracting arguments
    - He is working to sideline, to stumble God's people
    - Though we are no longer his, nevertheless we can still be deceived into doing his will Paul says at the end of v.26
    - That's what happens when Christians turn aside to follow these myths or live in open rebellion
  - That's what Timothy and the rest of Ephesus would be doing if they continued to run from their witness, to entertain false teaching and avoid persecution
    - They were deceived, held captive by the enemy
    - And in danger of being found to be vessels filled with dishonor
    - The Father is merciful, but He is also an exacting Master who reaps where He does not sow
    - He expects us to obey His commands