Keeping The Faith

2 Timothy 2:19

Objective: Help @ stand confident in their relationship with the Lord.
Reading: 2 Timothy 2:14-21.
Memory: 2 Timothy 2:19, "T_ L_ k_ t_ w_ a_ h_," a_, "E_ w_ c_ t_ n_ o_ t_ L_ m_ t_ a_ f_ w_."
Introduction:

1. There are two things that Timothy is struggling as The Apostle writs this letter to him, that are also common struggles with each of us.
2. First, Timothy is discouraged about the effectiveness of his efforts to serve God. There is opposition to his efforts and folks are not responding as it seems they should. As a result, Timothy has a much lower expectation of success and is not as enthusiastic in his efforts as he once was. Sound familiar?
3. Second, people always seem to be bringing in some new teaching that sounds persuasive but is just not really right. Like Hymenaeus and Philetus, who as we just read have wandered away from the truth with some concept of the resurrection already came and went, and by their error are destroying the faith of others. Sound familiar?
4. These sorts of struggles are often prevalent and should not hinder or discourage us if we know we are standing on the firm foundation of truth and righteousness and the power of Almighty God.

We should have confidence that we have the right foundation. (HOW?)

I don't want all these doubts, I want the Lord to be with me, and I want to be with Him. For sure! In 2 Timothy 2:19, the Apostle Paul describes this confidence in God's Presence and God's blessing in terms of our having God's solid foundation. Foundations of large buildings are sometimes identifies with inscriptions; *"Erected by Johnson and Sons, Dependable Builders, 1824".*

God's solid foundation, upon which we can stand with confidence, upon which we ought to base our spiritual life and work is identified by two truth concepts. Here are two spiritual truths that we should stand on to have confidence that our efforts to serve God are valid and successful.

The first true concept or principle we kneed to know, to establish our confidence in our own efforts is -

I. The Lord Knows Those Who Are His.

A. God will defend His own.
   1. This is obvious throughout Old Testament and New. Despite the evident success of their opponents. Whether people, politics or Satan . Those who are God's are ultimately saved.
   2. Paul as illustration; 2 Timothy 3:10-11, ***"[10] You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, [11] persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them."***
   3. Again in 2 Timothy 4:16-18, ***"At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. [17] But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth. [18] The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen."***
   4. He will do the same for you! 2 Peter 2:9, ***"… the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment."***
   5. 2 Timothy 4:14, ***"Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done."*** Let God take care of them. Vengeance belongs to the Lord.
   6. I sometimes flip to the last page of a book when I get anxious, to see how it ends. We win!
   7. There is great encouragement here; God knows your situation. He cares. Has NOT abandoned you. He will ultimately protect you from evil, from Satan and from adversaries. *If you are His*.

B. God knows *you*!
   1. Galatians 6:7-8, ***"[7] Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.***

[8] The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life."

2. God knows people's inner motives. He knows the truth; the reality; are you really, genuinely His, or are you pretending? Are you serving half-heartedly?
3. Are you thinking you are a temple to the Holy Spirit while knowingly harboring secret sins? Do you carry on with your old natural fleshly habits, assuming God will not notice, or are you genuinely pursuing the things of the Spirit?
4. Those in true fellowship can draw near comfortably and confidently.
5. The validity of your belonging to God is still your choice to make. Regardless of controversies over predestination of the "elect", the emphasis is repeatedly on each one's individual choosing. Do you really belong to the Lord or not?

C. There is confidence in knowing God knows you are His.

1. For your service efforts to be successful;
   a. Galatians 6:9, ***"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."***
   b. Hebrews 6:10, ***"God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them."***
2. For forgiveness of failures and unintentional sins.
3. For you to receive help and guidance from God.
   a. By saying you missed the resurrection.
   b. By saying you missed the Holy Spirit.
   c. By pressing legalisms upon you. Binding unnecessary restrictions.
4. For protection from evil influences.
5. If you *know* you belong to God, keep open to continue learning and growing, but don't let anyone disturb your confidence.

The second inscription not only gives us assurance that we are walking right and doing right, but helps us identify in regard to other spiritual leaders and influences, who is true and who is false.

II. Everyone Who Confesses The Name Of The Lord Must Turn Away From Wickedness.

A. To claim salvation *IS* to depart from sin.

1. To claim to be Christian *IS* to get rid of all sin in our lives.
2. You cannot knowingly continue in sin and really belong to the Lord! Hebrews 10:26-27, ***"If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God."*** Obedience to the ethical demands of the Gospel are mandatory, not optional. Learn what sin is and get it out of your life.
3. Titus 2:11-14, ***"[11] For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. [12] It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, [13] while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, [14] who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good."***
   a. If we are genuinely HIS, we will be genuinely striving to attain this purity.
   b. Has your language improved since you became a Christian? Are you working at changing your thoughts about lustful things? Do you continue to spent time on worldly passions?
4. Psalm 34:14-19, ***"[14] Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. [15] The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their cry; [16] the face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth. [17] The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. [18] The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. [19] A righteous man may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all;"***
5. If you are still accepting / practicing evil, you are in trouble! You are *NOT* standing on the foundation! You are *NOT* really confessing the name of the Lord. Get real!

B. One who fails to produce appropriate fruit is not really in fellowship with God.
   1. Look at the fruit the person's life produces to know who is on the solid foundation. If they have a teaching that sounds good and godly, look at their life to see if they are really in the name of the Lord or not.
   2. 1 Corinthians 11:19, ***"No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval."***
   3. If they claim to have insight into God but are doing tarot cards, have outbursts of anger, live in sexual immoral situations, or obviously hate some people, look out! They are not really calling on the name of the Lord.
   4. Matthew 7:15-20, ***"[15] Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. [16] By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? [17] Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. [18] A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. [19] Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. [20] Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them."***

C. You can know you are a vessel of honor, fit for use by the King of kings.
   1. Read 2 Timothy 2:20-21, ***"[20] In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. [21] If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work."***
   2. Some vessels are used by everybody, Some are special to be used only in honor God.
   3. There is still a variety of uses. Some may be bedpans and some drinking cups, but those used by the King of kings are reserved for His use and are not for "common" usage.
   4. *Choose* to be cleansed and set aside for the King of king's holy uses.
   5. Earnestly put off all evil! 2 Timothy 2:22-26, ***"[22] Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. [23] Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. [24] And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. [25] Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, [26] and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will."***
   6. Stop grumbling, stop doubting.

So What?

Those who belong to the Lord can have confidence that they will be taken care of by God. Those who do not genuinely belong to the Lord will be summarily dealt with also in due time. Know that the Lord is with you. Know that the Lord will help you in your efforts. Though some teach false and erroneous doctrines that tend to confuse us at times, though some loose their faith and drift off course, the firm foundation of God still stands reliably, and you can identify this solid foundation and confidently take your stand on it. It has two identifying features; The Lord knows those who are His, and those who are His are diligent to put off all sin.

God is never confused, even if you are. Make sure you belong to God, then entrust yourself to Him.

Closing Prayer:

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Two spiritual truths that we should stand on in order to have confidence that our efforts to serve God are valid and successful.

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A. God will defend His own.
2 Timothy 3:10-11 2 Timothy 4:16-18 2 Peter 2:9 2 Timothy 4:14

B. God knows *you*!
Galatians 6:7-8

C. There is confidence in knowing God knows you are His.
Galatians 6:9 Hebrews 6:10

II. Everyone Who Confesses The Name Of The Lord Must Turn Away From Wickedness.

A. To claim salvation *IS* to depart from sin.
Hebrews 10:26-27 Titus 2:11-14 Psalm 34:14-19

B. One who fails to produce appropriate fruit is not really in fellowship with God.
1 Corinthians 11:19 Matthew 7:15-20

C. You can know you are a vessel of honor, fit for use by the King of kings.
2 Timothy 2:20-21 2 Timothy 2:22-26

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