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2 Timothy 3:1-13
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Read v1

- *Read Hebrews 1:1-2*
- Last days = era that began with the arrival of God's Son, Jesus
- So the "last days" began 2000 years ago... and we're still living in them
- Everything Paul tells us in ch3 is true today – we are living in the "difficult times" of v1

Read v2-9

- "men" = "mankind" = humanity in general
 - o whole horrible list isn't true of every single individual person on earth
 - o but it accurately describes the extent of evil that infects humanity as a whole

- v5 "Avoid such men as these"
 - o Paul is not telling us to avoid unbelievers – we're called to do opposite – pursue them!
 - o IMO this is specifically to Tim as pastor – keep these false teachers out of your church

- v6 "captivate weak women"
 - o This is not about women being weak or gullible
 - o It's about false teachers who preyed on the uneducated
 - o In Paul's day women were not educated – so they were vulnerable to cults / heresies
 - o In our day women are just as educated as men
 - o So this describes cult leader or false teacher who preys on uneducated men or women
 - o We can all imagine a few televangelists who fit this description!
 - Deceiving naïve people into giving them \$ - that's who Paul's talking about

- v8 "Jannes and Jambres"
 - o According to Jewish writings = 2 Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses
 - o Tried to convince Pharaoh that Moses was not sent by God... they failed
 - o So false teachers will always fail in the end – God will set things right

Reality #1 – This world is evil

- Has been since the fall in Gen 3

- That will continue until Christ returns because humans are bent towards evil
 - o Humans by nature “love themselves” = selfish = dominant idea – source of all evil
 - o We are: greedy, prideful, demeaning, rebellious against parents, fight, gossip, immoral, brutal, sarcastic, liars, betrayers... who pretend to be religious while rejecting God

- Theologians call this **DEPRAVITY**
 - o sin has broken the human race in every way
 - o our hearts, minds, emotions, relationships, beliefs... all corrupted by sin

- That’s why evil persists no matter what laws are passed or who’s in office

- **There is only one solution... the GOSPEL**
- Paul tells us in *2 Cor 5:17*
 - o The moment you trusted in Jesus the old you died
 - The you that was slave of sin, unable to please God, unable to truly love others
 - o A new you began – a new creation – brought to life by God’s Holy Spirit
 - You are a new person – able to resist sin – able to please God!

- This was you before believing in Jesus... *read Eph 2:1-3*
- But this is you now that you have trusted in Jesus... *read Eph 5:1-2*
 - o you’re no longer a child of wrath – you’re now a beloved child of God
 - o you don’t have to sin anymore – you can selflessly love others like Jesus loves us
 - o believing in Jesus is the one and only solution to the problem of sin
 - o **ONLY** way to escape the evil of v1-9
 - o If anything’s holding you back...come talk to me

- **For those who have believed: let this reality shape your expectations of life**
- So: practical application #1) Don’t be surprised by evil

- **Practical application #2) Pray for the salvation of the lost**
 - *read v13* – this should inspire COMPASSION for the lost
 - yes the deceive... but they are also themselves deceived
 - **they are both victim and perpetrator**
 - they have bought into the lie of sin and fallen prey to the evil one

 - **Our hearts should break when we think about the lost**
 - Remember Jesus’ prayer on the cross for the men who crucified Him
 - “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.”
 - The lost don’t know how lost they are – can’t see the extent of evil in them
 - Because they are blinded by sin and held captive by Satan

 - **I need to be reminded of that – when I heard the quotes from Trump this week...**
 - Pray for the lost, that God would save them from the tragedy of v13

Reality #2 – Christians will be persecuted

- *Read 3:10-12*
- *v12 – blanket promise*
 - If you choose to not only believe in Jesus but to live for Jesus you will be persecuted
- Jesus made a similar promise – *read John 15:18-20*
- Any person who chooses to publicly follow Jesus will suffer for it

- When persecution comes follow Paul’s advice in v10 – remember those who suffered well
 - includes Paul and Peter and John and all the Apostles

- **According to 2 Tim 3 this is the norm, not the exception**
- America is the exception... and I don’t expect it will last much longer
 - We should expect that persecution will get worse in this country
 - We may lose our jobs, our wealth, our freedom...
- But that’s ok because that’s what God told us to expect – that’s the price we’re called to pay
- Until that day of persecution comes for us...
- **...the least we can do is PRAY for Christians who are suffering around the world**
 - *read Heb 13:3*

- So let's join together and PRAY WITH THE PERSECUTED CHURCH
 - For God's comfort and strength
 - For faithfulness and perseverance
 - That they would be a witness for Jesus to their persecutors

I'm ending my sermon early today to give us time to pray

- for the persecuted church
- for our missionaries serving in dangerous places

Now let's join together and pray for two things:

- Salvation, not destruction of the lost
- Faithfulness, not safety of the church