

2 Timothy 3:1-5 (TLB) *You may as well know this too, Timothy, that in the last days it is going to be very difficult to be a Christian. For people will love only themselves and their money; they will be proud and boastful, sneering at God, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful to them, and thoroughly bad. They will be hardheaded and never give in to others; they will be constant liars and troublemakers and will think nothing of immorality. They will be rough and cruel, and sneer at those who try to be good. They will betray their friends; they will be hotheaded, puffed up with pride, and prefer good times to worshiping God. They will go to church, yes, but they won't really believe anything they hear. Don't be taken in by people like that.*

2 Timothy 4:3-4 *For the time will come when they will not tolerate sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance with their own desires, and they will turn their ears away from the truth and will turn aside to myths.*

History has proven these words. Heresies flooded the church in the first century eroding the truth of God and His message. But the true church prospered in those times and warned churches even to today to look for the next coming of the Lord, the second advent, that we see the signs of the times in these scriptures. Why? God loves the church.

Ephesians 5:25-27 *Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.*

The lies of the enemy will always be trying to take the words of abundant life away. Apostasies and heresies will never destroy the true church of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit will continue to purify us to be holy and blameless. The message: God loves His church - all of it. The Holy Spirit is the refiner still at work among us.

The prophetic truth for today: Jesus still loves the church.

Work hard and give stuff away is a simple way to make practical the heartbeat of the Gospel. **John 3:16** *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life.* **Acts 20:35** *...remembering the words the Lord Jesus Himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'* Yet today, we avoid living it out by going to church but not believing what we hear. Read the **2 Timothy** passage again. The proof of what we believe is what comes out of our lives. How are we living? The church today is not looking different than our culture. We have a consumer Christianity of people coming to the church for what they can get instead of what they can give. We've become lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. Making church more attractive on Sunday morning is not wrong but when it becomes the Sunday morning compared to others as consumers, then we aren't producing Holy Spirit transformation and disciples.

The solution... work hard and give stuff away. Work hard at the right things and give away our very best. The church needs to follow the Master. Believe God's Word to the point of embracing it. Remember the verse... *They will go to church, yes, but they won't really believe anything they hear.* Belief needs to transform - hear and obey. The Word of God needs to change, renew, and challenge us. It is our choice.

Three keys to missional church life (instead of a consumer church) so that we are inspired and empowered by the Holy Spirit to go out.

1) Prayer and intercession. God wants us to go far beyond what we have experienced. Prayer needs to be priority in every area of our church. There is a greater need for prophetic intercession before the Lord. Spirit-empowered discernment and sincere crying out to God are so needed today especially as we see the church beaten down. Praying for others and not ourselves is intercession. Supplication is bringing my needs before the Lord. We need intercession as a top priority - Asking for miracles, deliverance, conviction, fear of coming judgment for unbelievers...

2) Bible study with the Holy Spirit. Bible study has become a buffet line for those not wanting to work hard at seeking on our own. Seeking God with the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures is the key to holy living. We need the character of and relationship with Christ. **John 16:13** *But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.* What an awesome promise! Give God the first part of our days as Jesus did.

3) True fellowship of His saints. **Ephesians 4:29-32** *Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.* We need to put the bitterness away and we need to declare repentance. And we can through Jesus. True fellowship is when we go before the Lord and we choose to love others the way You have loved me. The power of multiplication in the church comes through the true fellowship of the saints.

We work hard at those three keys above and then we give away our very best of what God has given us.

I John 4:9-11 *God showed how much He loved us by sending His only Son into this wicked world to bring to us eternal life through His death. In this act we see what real love is: it is not our love for God but His love for us when He sent His Son to satisfy God's anger against our sins. Dear friends, since God loved us as much as that, we surely ought to love each other too. I John 4:19-21* *So you see, our love for Him comes as a result of His loving us first. If anyone says "I love God," but keeps on hating his brother, he is a liar; for if he doesn't love his brother who is right there in front of him, how can he love God whom he has never seen? And God Himself has said that one must love not only God but his brother too. I John 5:1-3* *If you believe that Jesus is the Christ—that He is God's Son and your Savior—then you are a child of God. And all who love the Father love His children too. So you can find out how much you love God's children—your brothers and sisters in the Lord—by how much you love and obey God. Loving God means doing what He tells us to do, and really, that isn't hard at all. (TLB)*

The church is a living body of love especially in the hard times, not for judgment and evaluations. Do you value the same people that God values? Allow the Holy Spirit to dig into our hearts today.

Ephesians 4:32 *Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.*