

October 16, 2016
2 Timothy 3:14-4:5

Proper 24C
Being a Christian = Lifelong Learner

Grace, mercy and peace be yours from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Phew! I don't have to listen to this text! I'm not a preacher! This text doesn't apply to me! Maybe you are thinking these very words after you heard or read in the bulletin the text for today. Yes, it's true, 2 Timothy 4 is read in the ordination rite and also the installation rite. It's a reminder to pastors to preach in season and out of season. It's a reminder for pastors to use it to reprove, rebuke, and exhort with complete patience and teaching. It's a reminder for pastors to teach the Word of God even when it is being combatted by other teachings that sound more thrilling and more politically correct. This would be a great text for an ordination and/or installation of a pastor.

So why this text for you? Because of these verses of our text: "But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work."

It's been said that you learn something every day! I find that true in my case! What have you learned today? What is God teaching you? What is the Word of God teaching you?

Paul in our text points Timothy to his younger days, to his education. How do you think Timothy learned to read and write? How did he learn his grammar, phonics, and ABCs? How did he learn history? What was his primary text book? – The SCRIPTURES – The Very Word of God. His education and His faith was given to him by hearing the Word from faithful teachers, which included his mother and grandmother. This faith that Timothy had was given to Him by God, but his learning in faith was passed down from one generation to the next. It was passed down by using the Sacred Writings – the Holy Scriptures.

Timothy was a lifelong learner in the faith. He eventually was trained to be a formal teacher, formal preacher of the Sacred Writings – the Holy Scriptures. Are you a life-long learner in the faith? Are you passing down the Word of God from one generation to the next?

Last week you heard from this very same letter, that the Word of God is not bound. It penetrates lives and changes them. It penetrates lives by people being taught the Word of God.

In our text, we hear the All Scripture...ALL 66 books of the bible are breathed out by God. They are His very Word. They are truth. They are also profitable for teaching. As you think to your life how good have you been at that. Teaching your kids, your grandkids, and other people in

your life the Word of God? Are you someone that believes that faith teaching be done only at church? Are you someone that has failed in this God-given task? What are you doing at home to incorporate the Holy Scriptures into your daily walk and the daily walk of your family? Some of you probably struggle more than others. Pick up the Bible, open it and start reading, perhaps at the very beginning when God by His Word speaks creation into being. There are tools, and I'd be willing to share some with you to guide you in your Biblical Walk! If you are a parent who struggles in this way, come and talk to me, I can give you some guidance?

The Word of God is profitable for reproof and correction. Yes that means that the Word of God speaks the Law...it convicts you of your sin. It tells you how it is! It tells you that you are sinner, that deserves only the wrath of God placed upon you. It rebukes you! Have you ever told a lie? Have you looked at a man or woman lustfully? Have you ever thought evil against your neighbor? Have you ever gossiped? Have you ever coveted? Have you ever made something cursed? Do you honor those in authority over you? You see, the Word of God rebukes...it points at your sin. The Word of God, the Law of God does this to you!

The Word of God doesn't leave you feeling guilty and in a corner or even bound to your sin. The Word of God does not leave you dead in your sin. For the Word of God is also profitable for correction. That means that the Word of God brings you back to God. It gives you the very Gospel of Jesus Christ. Through the Word of God you are forgiven of your sins. You are "corrected". The Gospel message is the only motivation for you to do anything good. The law does not and cannot motivate you...only the sweet words of the Gospel. Only the message that Jesus died and rose for you to forgive your sins and grant you life. The Law cannot correct you. It can only rebuke. The gospel though penetrates your hearts and tells you that You have worth. You are correctable. You are forgiven! The gospel saves you, it strengthens your faith, and continues to build in you so that you are corrected. That correction ultimately happened for you on the cross and the empty tomb. That correction happened personally to you, when the Word of God was joined with water and you were claimed as God's child. So with that you can, "God's own Child, I gladly say it, I am Baptized into Christ."

The Word of God, the same word that spoke creation into being, was born into human flesh, and died for those sins that you are convicted of through the Law. That Word made flesh rises from the dead to give you life! Not just any life, but a life as a lifelong learner of the Holy Scriptures, and not just that life either, but life in the renewed creation when Christ returns!

The Word of God is there for teaching, it is there for reproof/rebuke. It's there to convict you of your sin. It's also there to correct, which sounds like a law verb, but is there to bring you back to the Father. The Word of God is there to save you from your sins and correct your relationship to the Father.

The Word of God is also there for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work. As you live the life of a Christian, daily in God's Word, repenting of your sin and receiving God's forgiveness in your life. You are in continued training in righteousness. You are training in righteousness, a righteousness that only God

gives to you. The Holy Spirit is the one guiding your life! The Holy Spirit is the one that is training you in righteousness. The Holy Spirit is the one who takes the Holy Scriptures that are taught to you and uses them so that you can be competent and equipped for every good work.

This training in righteousness can give you the image of an athlete that is in training, in strict discipline. It also points back to our learning as children. A child needs to be disciplined and corrected, guided and encouraged if he or she is going to live as a good citizen and continue in this for a lifetime. Likewise, you, yourself as a Christian need to be in ongoing training in righteousness so that you can ably live in this world of sin. And part of that training is knowing that you will be tempted and through Christ you can resist that temptation. And when you do fall into temptation the continued discipline is going before your Lord and confessing that sin and receive forgiveness.

It's an ongoing process...it's a lifelong process. It's a lifelong process of learning until the Lord calls us out of this veil of tears. This lifelong process of training in righteousness through the Word of God reveals to us the very grace of God in our lives.

Think back to your childhood as I close this morning. Think back to your days in Sunday School or your current days in Sunday School. The story that was taught and is taught there is the story of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. The story that was and is taught is from the God-Breathed Word...the Strong Word that isn't just cognitive knowledge, but more importantly that training in righteousness. It's a training in righteousness with the Word of God that penetrates hearts, minds and lives. It's the Strong Word that goes into your dark world. For Thy Strong Word cleaves the darkness, it creates light. It creates light in a dark world. It breaks the light of Thy Salvation! This bespeaks us righteous! This Word of GOD bespeaks you righteous! It grants you faith! It forgives your sins! It brings you into a relationship with God your Father and continues to teach you all your life so that you are a lifelong learner of the faith from cradle till grave!

In Jesus name. Amen.

Now may the peace of God which passes all understanding, guard your hearts and minds and keep them focused in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior. Amen.