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This Sunday's sermon brought us to the halfway point of 2 Timothy. We looked at chapter 2:14-26 and took our first look at the false teachers who were living in Ephesus. False teaching is not necessarily something that we're used to, although there might be some who have experienced it firsthand. Paul tells us it is dangerous and gives Timothy some advice about how to respond to it in the church.

One aspect of the teaching that was circulating the church was the lie that the *final* resurrection had already taken place. As well as not being true, because we still look forward to a *physical* resurrection it also led to terrible consequences in the lives of those who believed it.

Resist false teachers/teaching

Firstly Paul instructs Timothy to stay away from false teachers, verse 14 and 16. There was the temptation for Timothy and others to engage with this new teaching even if they believed it to be false. Discussions turned to arguments which turned to quarrels which are unfitting for Christians.

Secondly Paul encourages Timothy to focus on the Word of truth and handle it correctly. Verse 15 is the key verse here. Timothy is to present himself to God and not men for approval and he is to correctly, carefully and accurately handle, interpret and teach the Word of truth. We thought about the seriousness of rightly understanding the Bible and the responsibility it is for all teachers.

Overcome false teaching/teachers

Timothy would have been a little concerned about the number of people who had fallen away from their faith due to this teaching but Paul encourages him to trust God's faithfulness in keeping his people but telling him that those people must turn away from wickedness in their lives.

He illustrates both these things with an Old Testament quote from Numbers 16:5 and a possible reference to 16:26 for the second quote showing God's judgement on the people of Korah and then a picture of a large house which represented the church within which were things that needed to be cleansed.

Reprove false teachers

Thirdly and finally Paul encourages Timothy to correct those who have been teaching false doctrines but to do it with kindness, love, gentles and in peace. He must not enter into

quarrels as this is ungodly and a bad witness. Paul gives hope that God will be merciful and grant that they understand their error and so repent which will lead to their coming to the knowledge of the truth and therefore escape the trap of the Devil which they find themselves in.

Here are a few questions to start discussion off – please add more and go deeper into meaning of what Paul is writing about

If you haven't done this the last few weeks, recap all that you remember from 2 Timothy so far.

How are 1 in 21s going? Share any encouraging stories.

What has your experience been of false teaching in or outside the church? What false teaching are you aware of that goes on in the global church today? (think about the sermon introduction)

14-18

What do these verses tell us about the nature of this false teaching?

How does engaging with and entering into arguments ruin/destroy people's faith?

How does the metaphor of a worker help understand the job Timothy has in how he handles the Word of truth?

Do you pray for Bible teachers enough? Pray for them together tonight?

19-21

Read the story in Numbers 16 and discuss how this illustrates Paul's point that "God knows those who are his"

Discuss the picture a large house given in verse 20. How does this illustration help teach the need to cleanse ourselves all that is wicked?

22-26

Are you ever tempted, like Timothy, to get hot-headed and argue your point in the gospel rather than focus on loving the person you're trying to win?

How do these verses show us the ungodly nature and results of quarrelling?

How should Timothy respond to false teachers? What is the more godly way?

From verses 25-26 What is the spiritual state of someone who is a false teacher?

Discuss how you might go about gently instructing someone who is teaching heretical doctrines?

Why do we need to pray for them as we try to teach them truth?

Summarise the passage in a short paragraph