

**July 5, 2015:**

**\*\*No Study Guide this week. If your group is using the sermon study guides, consider using a past study guide from the Mark series that you have not used yet.**

**O. Intro:**

\*I frequently get asked about whether military chaplains are being silenced, forced to violate their convictions, being run out the military.

-There are some new and unique challenges for military chaplains...but there always have been.

-At the same time there are some new and unique opportunities.

\*I also get asked my opinion regarding whether these are the end times...particularly in regards to persecution of Christians, cultural changes in American society, and even weather and war events.

\*Biblically/technically, yes, it is.

\*The "last days" are all of the time from the first advent to the second advent of Christ.

\*But practically, are these the last days as in "the world is about to end in the next few months or years?"...I have no idea, no one does.

\*But Terry..."The signs are everywhere"

\*Yep, they have been since the first advent and will be until the second.

**Matt 24:6 You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. 7 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of birth pains.**

\*Yeah, but what about our nation, isn't it in a free fall state of decline.

\*Our nation has cycled morally, spiritually, since its inception.

\*If you plotted it on a chart it wouldn't be a jagged line charting down...or a straight line downwards.

\*It would likely be a series of spiraling circles.

\*The circles would represent different parts of society: Some parts have trended down, some up, some up and down.

\* Yale was started in 1701 to train ministers of the gospel (one of the first 3).

-In 1795 it would have been hard to find a believer on campus among the students.

-The most popular book on Campus that year was Thomas Paine's "The Age of Reason."

-A book that attacked the validity of Christianity and the Bible.

\*By 1810 or so, a revival had so impacted the campus that many or most students were believers...this revival spread out across the nation as those students graduated.

\*A nation that was also in a serious state of spiritual, moral decline...1810.

\*Many examples...we were not in good shape morally or spiritually in the 1850's until the 1858 revival.

\*In the 1930's the combination of the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl drought was to many the apocalypse...the end of the world.

\*Those who lived through the complete blackness at midday, the plagues of locusts...truly believed they were living at the end of the world.

\*It was for some of them, but it was a very localized end of the world...very often is.

\*Even if something happened that actually did bring an end to our nation as we know it...it would certainly seem to us like the whole world had ended...but that is not necessarily true.

\*The idea that the end of America would be the end of the world, comes from a long held belief in what has been called Manifest Destiny:

-Normally three tenets:

- a. The virtue of the American people and institutions
- b. The mission to spread these institutions, remaking the world in the image of the US.
- c. The destiny under God to do this work...we are the "City of God" in the world.

\*See this perspective applied in the Long War (Iraq and Afghan)...with the attempts at "nation building" in places where there is just not the right kind of soil for democracy to take root.

\*I love America; I believe that God has blessed us, and that we have been exceptional in many ways.

\*I am also aware of the fact that though we are a nation of people founded on principles...as a people we have not always lived in line with higher principles.

\*I do believe it is an amazing country...historically unique...I'm not blind to our faults, but neither am I blind to our strengths.

\*There tends to be two extremes regarding America, both, I believe, are wrong.

### **1. Make America into the New Promised Land**

-The equivalent to the New Jerusalem

-We are the place where God dwells on earth...God is on "our team."

### **2. Make America into an evil place in the world.**

-To focus on all the bad done by Americans and to fail to highlight the massive amount of good...also wrong.

\*This is my country, the place God in his sovereignty has placed me...I have deep loyalty, gratitude, and commitment to our nation.

\*But in regards to God and America...God is not on our side...God is on God's side.

-We can choose individually, and in some cases collectively...to be on his side or not.

**Josh. 5:13** Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?" 14 "Neither," he replied, "but as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come."

\*It is never a question of whether God is on our side but if we are on his.

\*And being on God's side has always been an individual choice.

-Even with large groups of people (Israel, America, or families, churches)...the choice to trust and follow God is made by people in their own hearts and lives.

\*In that great challenge that the hero Joshua threw down in Joshua 24 he said..."Choose whether you will serve God or not...as for me, and my household...we have made our choice."

\*As the leader of the nation he knew...he could not by his personal choice decide for the nation, they had to each decide.

\*We are taking a break this week from the gospel of mark and we are going to look at how we are to think, believe and act in response to the many cultural changes going on around us.

\*I thought the 4th of July weekend would be a good time to do this...especially in light of some of the Supreme Court rulings along with the great upheavals in many parts of our country.

\*This introduction was to set the stage for our time this morning.

\*To give some historical, biblical perspective on the "Times" and the "place" in which we live.

\*In God's sovereign plan for our lives...we live in 2015 in Wichita, KS, United States of America.

\*Acts 17...God has set the exact time and place where we would live...why?

-So we would reach out and find him...though he is not far from us.

\*This same truth is true for every citizen of every nation of every time...God has determined their time and place...and he is always near to everyone in every place...so they can, if they chose to...can reach out and find him.

\*We have challenges and opportunities that are unique to our own particular time and place.

\*Every follower of Christ in every time and place has had their own unique challenges and opportunities.

## **PRAYER**

\***1 Tim**...A book written by Paul to the young man Timothy about how to think and live in the midst of the shifting sands of cultural changes.

**1Tim. 4:1** The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. **2** Such teachings come through hypocritical liars whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.

- a. Ideas being espoused that originate from the demonic (though the people espousing them, believe they are coming up with the ideas themselves.)
- b. They are hypocritical liars (word that implies they are willful, intentional in lying. They are not merely mistaken...they are strategic...know what they are doing).
- c. How can to do this? Their consciences have been scarred over, they have been desensitized...unable to experience conviction or feel guilt.

\*Paul mentions two examples of the kinds of things they were teaching:

**3 They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. 4 For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, 5 because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.**

\*Asceticism (technical term for this belief system) it was the belief that the physical world is evil, or without any real meaning, so pleasure should be avoided if you wanted to transcend the physical and be holy.

\*You were more holy if you didn't do certain things...eat certain food, marry (sexual relationships)

\*There was another early false teaching that was sort of the opposite of asceticism in its application but based on the same ideas regarding the physical world.

\*It was called "antinomianism" ...no law.

\*For the antinomian, it doesn't matter what you do since the physical is just the physical...and not the most important...so do whatever feels good.

\*Both cases the wrong-headed disconnect between the reality of the spiritual and the reality of the physical causes a life imbalance.

\*Here Paul responds to the "no food, no marriage" bunch by saying..."God created both food and marriage to be enjoyed"...with conditions...

\*When they are "consecrated by the word of God and prayer."

\*Consecrated means "made holy"..."set apart for God"...how?

\*When they are aligned with God's will and ways (word of God & prayer)

\*How does this apply to our current situation?

\*Apart from the obvious connection with the misguided attempts to re-define the purpose of marriage even though marriage originated in the mind of God not of man.

\*There are other applications as well.

1. Our culture like theirs, is driven by ideas that people believe they have "discovered" but have in fact been given to them by the enemy...these are demonic ideas.

-These ideas are translated into actions, policies, and cultural norms.

2. These ideas often come from people who may know they are not telling the truth, but in their minds the end justifies their means.

\*Since they are not restrained by a commitment to the will of God...they can accomplish their own purposes with no regard to integrity.

\*They believe their cause is so great...lying to achieve it is worthwhile.

\*Let me give you a current example with roots going back to the 50's in our country.

\*Bruce Jenner, now calling himself Caitlyn...has become a folk hero...but the backstory on the transgender movement is quite dark...full of deception.

\*Article by Matt Hoyer, a man who using his own words, "Suffered through 'sex change' surgery and lived as a woman for eight years. The surgery fixed nothing...it only masked and exacerbated deeper psychological problems."

\*The setting for the first transgender surgeries was in university-based clinics, starting in the 1950s and progressing through the 1960s and the 1970s.

\*When the researchers tallied the results and found no objective proof that it was successful—and, in fact, evidence that it was harmful—the universities stopped offering sex-reassignment surgery.

\*Since then, private surgeons have stepped in to take their place. Without any scrutiny or accountability for their results, their practices have grown, leaving shame, regret, and suicide in their wake.

\*These facts have been kept hidden...replaced by airbrushed pictures of a confused man.

\*The transgender movement began as the brainchild of three men who shared a common bond: all three were pedophilia activists.

\*The story starts with the infamous Dr. Alfred Kinsey, a biologist and sexologist whose terrible legacy endures today. Kinsey believed that all sex acts were legitimate—the list includes everything).

\*He authorized despicable experiments on infants and toddlers to gather information.

\*Kinsey advocated the normalization of pedophilia and lobbied against laws that would protect innocent children and punish sexual predators.

\*He was criminal, a serial abuser...instead of going to prison where he belonged...his research was used to set policy and precedent.

\*Another of the fathers of the movement...Dr. John Money...abused children and fabricated research

results...there twin brothers who were abused by Dr. Money as part of his "quote" research...both committed suicide.

\*Dr. Money then became the co-founder of one of the first university-based gender clinics in the United States at Johns Hopkins University, where gender reassignment surgery was performed.

\*After the clinic had been in operation for several years, Dr. Paul McHugh, the director of psychiatry and behavioral science at Hopkins, wanted more than Money's assurances of success immediately following surgery. McHugh wanted more evidence. Long-term, were patients any better off after surgery?

\*McHugh assigned the task of evaluating outcomes to Dr. Jon Meyer, the chairman of the Hopkins gender clinic. Meyer selected fifty subjects from those treated at the Hopkins clinic, both those who had undergone gender reassignment surgery and those who had not had surgery. The results of this study completely refuted Money's claims about the positive outcomes of sex-change surgery. The objective report showed no medical necessity for surgery.

\*Less than six months later, the Johns Hopkins gender clinic closed. Other university-affiliated gender clinics across the country followed suit, completely ceasing to perform gender reassignment surgery. No success was reported anywhere.

\*On research physician reported "There is too much unhappiness among people who have had the surgery...too many end in suicide."

\* <http://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2015/04/14905/>

\*The point of that is to give a current example of what has been around a long time.

**\*The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. 2 Such teachings come through hypocritical liars whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.**

\*The application varies...the foundations are the same.

\*People who believe what is in their own heads...sounds right to them...

\*Not knowing that they did not think it up...but rather it is the deception of the enemy...planting ideas in order to destroy.

\*A proud mind is a fertile ground for demonic ideas..."people who really believe they are brilliant and have no need for God become easy prey for demonic ideas."

\*Let's go on to see how we are to respond.

**4:6 If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, brought up in the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed. 7 Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. 8 For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.**

**\*We are to:**

**1. Keep the truth in front of each others eyes and minds.**

-This is believer to believer

**2. Steer clear of godless myths and old wives tales.**

\*These, Paul said, are fables, fairy tales, the kind that an old woman of that time would tell little children.(there was a Greek word for this)

\*The problem is when people believe these fairy tales...it becomes a disaster.

\*When you try to live a myth...the life consequences are terrible.

\*By the way, another evidence of the truth of the gospel is that the closer a life aligns with it...relationally, vocationally, physically, mentally...the better the life results are.

\*Why?...it shows we are living in line with how life itself has been designed.

\*The so-called sexual revolution of the 60's with actual roots earlier than that...has implications in the lives of real people.

\*Ruined lives, wide spread generational abuse and brokenness.

\*It started with ideas incepted by demons into the minds of arrogant men and women who turned their backs on God.

**3. Instead of believing these myths... we must train (gymnasium)...for godliness...**

\*Paul said...as a comparison and contrast...you are aware of the benefits of physical exercise...but it is all short-term.

\*Godliness on the other hand has an impact in both in time and eternity.

**\*How do you train for godliness?**

\*Similar to how you would train for anything...choosing thoughts, repetition of action of what you want to become reflexive both mentally and physically, working together with others who have similar training goals.

\*Then he gives a statement of the confidence that drives the training lifestyle.

**9 This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance 10 (and for this we labor and strive)  
(Here is the vision behind the training), that we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of  
all men, and especially of those who believe.**

**\*He alone is the Savior of men...and this salvation becomes operational for those who place their faith  
in.**

\*When Franklin Roosevelt died in 1945...after being president for 12 years through much of the Great Depression, the dust bowl and WWII...it was said and written about him..."The Savior of the world has died."

\*But he, unlike the true Savior of the world...did not defeat death...it defeated him.

\*Key point here in verse 9...We can confidence because of the gospel.

\*Our training in Godliness...and avoidance of the "old wives tales of culture" is powered by our confidence in God...he alone is worthy of our ultimate trust and allegiance.

\*Old wives tales...includes those taught by cultural leaders...scientists, politicians, media personalities as well as ministers who have gone rogue in their theology.

\*Jump down to verse 16...we will stop here and move to application

**16 Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.**

\*Here is a clue as to how we are to respond to our culture.

\*It is a first a personal response...like Joshua...he didn't say to Israel..."Hey be a godly nation!"

\*He said "I've chosen, now you chose...each of you."

\*The personal choice will move out into interpersonal impacts.

\*Pay close attention both to what you believe(doctrine) and to your life (inner and outer you).

\*Persevere in them both...keep at it...keep training mind and body for godliness...because if you do...you will be used by God to demonstrate and communicate the gospel to others.

\*Does this mean, if you don't persevere that you will lose your salvation?

\*No it means that perseverance is both a result of justification(gift of God) and an ongoing choice of sanctification ( a personal decision)

\*Those God has justified...saved...will demonstrate that fact by their persevere...it is both his gift and our own ongoing choice.

\*The part I want to draw your attention to is..."**watch your life and doctrine (belief)**" closely...

\*Paul in the midst of teaching about how to respond to demonic teaching that is clearly wrong and destructive is to...

\*Challenge the believers to "pay attention to their own life and belief **first**...persevere in right thinking and living."

\*Paul, formerly Saul...knew first hand that this is how real impact occurs.

### **Case study: Saul/Paul**

\*We have been looking at a passage from a letter Paul wrote to his young protégée, Timothy.

\*In his second letter to Timothy he wrote this from his own personal experience.

**2Tim. 2:25 Those who oppose (you), (you) must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth,**

\*Paul knew what it was like to be opposed because of his faith...and he knew what it was like to oppose people of faith...he had once been a terrible persecutor of Christians...and he in turn had been horrible persecuted.

\*Saul was there giving approval when Stephen was stoned to death for his faith in Christ.

\*Stephen was a man known for his deep walk with God and deep love and concern for widows and orphans.

\*This good man, making a tremendous cultural impact on his community because of his faith...was killed, under Saul's supervision for being a Christian.

\*It had to impact Saul to see how this godly man died...full of grace and faith.

\*Saul then set out to completely destroy the church...he would do anything to see it annihilated.

\*But he was encountered by God, who turned his life around.

\*Then God sent him to the same people he had been persecuting...and they housed him, fed him, trained him, and protected him.

\*Saul became Paul...went from the worst persecutor, to best church planter.

\*So he wrote to young Timothy...

**\*"Those who oppose you" "you must gently instruct"**

**\*Why?**

**\* "In the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth."**

**\*This had happened to him, and he had seen it happen to others.**

\*The people who believe lies are not our enemy...the enemy is our enemy.

**Eph. 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.**

\*This doesn't mean I'm a pacifist, or that I don't believe police or military action to protect innocent lives is right and necessary at times.

\*I am not talking about being nice to ISIS and all will be well.

\*Or to simply pray for some murderer with a gun in his hand because, after all, the real battle is spiritual and not physical.

\*I'm talking about an approach, a mentality, a perspective on how we see the people in our culture who are very different in their beliefs and values...and even the ones who attack us for our faith.

\*They may mock and demonize us...but we must never do the same to them.

\*What are we to do with this?

\*Start with our thinking about the changes we are seeing that unsettles us.

\*Change is a constant with everyone and everything except God.

\*Change can be hard but it is a constant...how are we to think about it...especially when it seems and actually is some time very negative?

\*We should think in terms of the fact that unique challenges most often include unique opportunities.

\*It is common to see the challenges clearly, but we often need help to see the opportunities.

\*And even more so to make the most of the opportunities.

**Eph. 5:15 Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.**

\*Evil days (days of great challenge)

-Paul said were days of great opportunity.

\*Takes careful, wise living to buy up these opportunities

\*Betsy Ten Boom...bed bugs and bible study. (favorite story of opportunity embedded in adversity)

\*How was she able to have this kind of perspective in such terrible circumstances...well she had "trained for godliness."

\*Like the coach says..."You will play like you practice."

\*Seeing opportunity in times of adversity...requires...ongoing training to trust, believe God.

## **CONCLUSION:**

\*How are we to gain and maintain a perspective that sees the ongoing opportunities in the midst of ongoing challenges?

**\*Two catchphrases that might help: (live with confidence, act with kindness)**

**\*This is not "Give Isis a Coke and a smile and the world will be a better place."**

\*This is not some bumper sticker, all religions are the same and we can all get along if we try.

\*These phrases are founded on all I have said so far...they are outcomes of the truth of the gospel.

### **1. Live with confidence.**

\*Confidence in the gospel, like any kind of confidence will result from training...competence fuels confidence.

\*How do we become more competent in the "gospel."

\*Watch your doctrine and life closely:

-Do the work, spend the time to embed the truth of the gospel deep in your mind.

-Live your life, acting in ways that align with the truth of the gospel--In a variety of circumstances.

\*You will experience:

-Growth in competence (understand how to live out the truth in a variety of challenging situations)...this skill (competence, will lead to increasing confidence)

"hey, this stuff does actually work."

-Growth in personally testimony. You will have a growing personal account of the movement of God in your own life.

\*Confidence in the gospel...as a result of competence in living the gospel...seeing God move.

### **2. Act with Kindness**

\*Treating others with kindness, whether we believe they deserve it or not...is fundamental to our faith.

**\*Read: 2 Tim. 2:25 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.**

\*Here's the verse before that...

**2Tim. 2:24 And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.**

**\*Kindness not being combinative is key to transforming culture...lives.**

\*So...as we read, see and experience the changes in our culture, some really are bad...our first thoughts should be...

"What are the unique opportunities embedded in these unique challenges?"

\*Paul writing to a group of believers who were focused on the end of the world gave them some advice that seems counter-intuitive.

**1Th. 4:11 Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, 12 so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.**

\*Notice he didn't say "stock pile food and guns"

\*He said...live a normal life, a kind of daily life that people outside the faith will watch and respect.

\*Some had given up on normal life because the end was immanent...so the result was that others had to take care of them...that's why Paul said...

"In light of the end of days, live a daily, normal life...work hard and take care of yourself and gain the respect of outsiders by your normal, daily life."

\*This is the exact opposite of "The world is over...let's all go act weird!"

**\*When the changes upset you...ask "What are the unique opportunities here?"**

**\*Then...act with...**

1. Growing confidence and competence in the Gospel.
2. Kindness especially towards those who don't deserve it or even want it from you.



THE END

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THOMAS PAINE  
THE AGE  
OF REASON





©  
1934  
Rosebud Photo  
©  
GREGORY, S.D.

ONE OF SOUTH DAKOTA'S "BLACK BLIZZARDS"  
1934

A dark, grainy photograph of a blizzard. Several bright, circular light sources are visible against the black background, likely representing streetlights or building lights. The lights are out of focus, creating a soft, hazy glow. The overall scene is very dark and atmospheric.

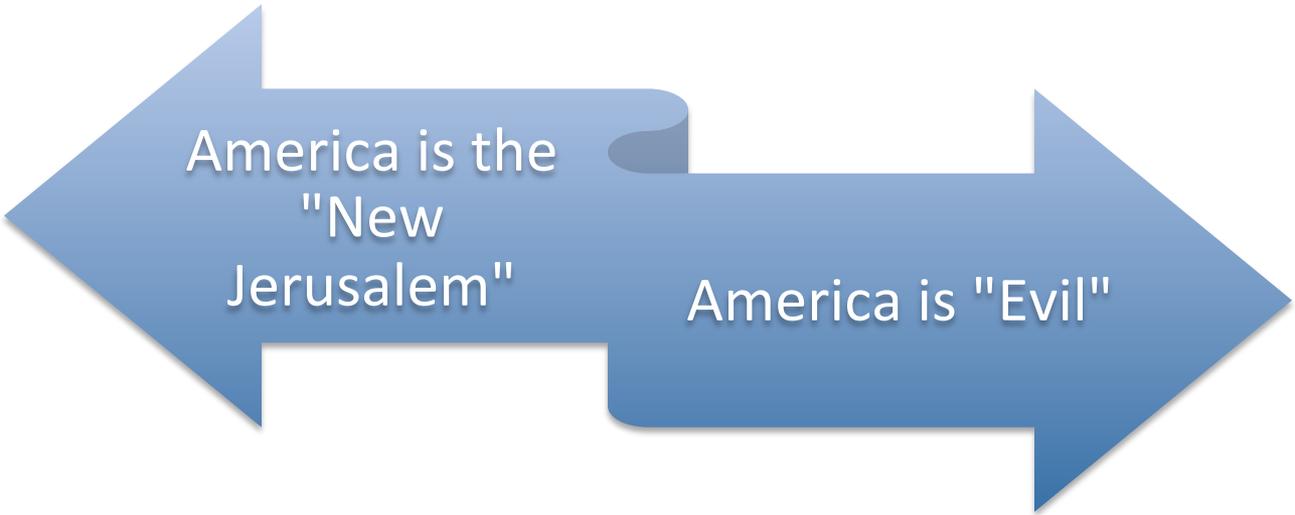
3:00 P. M.

The Black Blizzard of Sunday, April 14 '35

Stovall Studio - Dodge City, Kansas #7

# Manifest Destiny:

- 1. The virtue of the American people and institutions.**
- 2. The mission to spread these institutions, remaking the world in the image of the US.**
- 3. The "destiny" under God to do this work.**



America is the  
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Jerusalem"

America is "Evil"

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**"God has set your exact time and place"**

**Acts 17**

***We have challenges and opportunities  
that are unique to our own particular  
time and place.***

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**Asceticism**

**Antinomianism**

- 1. Ideas "incepted" into human minds from demons**
- 2. Their end justifies any means**

**Matt Hoyer**

**[http://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/  
2015/04/14905/](http://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2015/04/14905/)**

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**1. Keep the truth in front of each other's minds**

**2. Steer clear of godless myths**

**3. Train for godliness**

**9 This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance 10 (and for this we labor and strive), that we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe.**

**16 Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.**

***Perseverance is both a result of our justification(a gift of God) and an ongoing choice of our sanctification (a personal decision)***

**Watch your life and doctrine closely**

**2Tim. 2:25 Those who oppose (you),  
(you) must gently instruct, in the  
hope that God will grant them  
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**Eph. 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.**

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**Live with confidence**

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***Ask: "What are the unique opportunities embedded in these unique challenges?"***

***Act: "With confidence and kindness!"***