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Peace, Sun Prairie  
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Pentecost 7

***2 Timothy 3:10-4:5***  
***Continue in the Pure Word***

*The word of the LORD is flawless. He is a shield for all who take refuge in Him. Amen.*

*Dear Friends in Christ,*

*“So if everyone else jumped off a building, would you do it too?”* Though we may have groaned when our parents said something like that, yet they were making an important point.

Whether young or old, the argument that “everyone else is doing it” is extremely tempting. Therefore we need to remember it is foolish to go along with the crowd when it does what is wrong and dangerous.

Our second lesson urges us *not* go along with overwhelming crowds who turn away from God’s Holy Word. May the Holy Spirit give us strength to listen to

that encouragement so that we **Continue in the Pure Word.**

What the Apostle Paul wrote to a young pastor named Timothy applies today every bit as much as when it was first written some 2,000 years ago: **The time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.**

The unbelieving world has never had time for the true teachings of God's Word, and it never will. But with these words Paul tells us the world's attitudes will also be found in the visible church.

Even within Christian churches, people won't want **sound doctrine**, teaching that says what the Bible says—no more and no less. Instead, they'll pick whatever they want to believe and look for a pastor, professor, church or book to ignore or twist the word of God to tell them what they want to hear.

It's truly sad that wouldn't be enough time in a hundred sermons to cover how accurately these words describe our own day. There are plenty of teachers, individuals and church bodies that will toss aside God's clear word for what their own sinful hearts want to hear—especially if what God says is unpopular, unreasonable, politically incorrect, goes against the latest scientific theories or gets in the way of what they want to do.

Suppose a doctor decided he didn't want his patients to feel bad so he wouldn't tell them they were sick and he wouldn't give them any medicine either, since after that would mean they were sick. Such a “*nice*” doctor would only cause harm.

Sadly that's exactly the kind of spiritual doctor sinful **itching ears** want. Don't talk about God's law. Don't call something sin. Don't speak of hell or repentance. Don't say I'm so evil by nature that it took God dying on a cross to save me.

Just tell me nice things about myself, entertain me and just give me advice on how to be healthy, wealthy and wise in this life. Don't tell me I should only feel good because of God's undeserved mercy.

Tragically there is no shortage of such “*nice*” spiritual doctors found even in Christian churches and many eager to follow them. But setting aside God’s Word and downplaying sin it only causes spiritual harm. It takes hearts away from Jesus and the medicine for sick souls only His forgiveness brings!

So why stick with the Bible? Why continue in God’s Word even though doing so may bring may bring insult and persecution as we’ve heard in our lessons this morning? The answer is in the question: Because it is God’s Word.

**All Scripture is God-breathed.** A trumpet doesn’t make noise on its own, but only when a musician breathes into. So the prophets and apostles who wrote the pages of the Bible didn’t write on their own, but God the Holy Spirit breathed into those authors, guiding their work so that every word they wrote were the ones God wanted.

Therefore all the Bible is God’s Word: from first verse to last verse, whether the world likes it or not. That is

reason enough for His believing people to **continue in His Word.**

Someone has said: “if all God ever said to us was “la, la, la, la” we should consider it the most wonderful thing we’ve ever heard, simply because it came from God. So how much more when God says far more important things to us than “la, la, la”!

**All Scripture is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.** His Word teaches us all we absolutely need to know. His Word **corrects, rebukes, and trains,** teaching us the truth about right and wrong, so that we’re not left in the dark guessing.

But the greatest reason to **continue in the pure Word** is this: **the holy Scriptures... are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.** What we need to know most of all is that God had mercy on sinners and sent his Son to rescue the world, to save us from the punishment we deserve.

Through this good news about Jesus, God the Holy Spirit actually makes people **wise for salvation.**

creating the faith that says: “Jesus died and rose *for me*, to save *me*.”

The Holy Spirit also works through the Word to lead believers to live their lives in thanks for their Savior God: **that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

God’s Word works powerfully in human hearts. So, even if all the world forsakes the Bible, let us **continue in the pure Word.**

If everyone else jumped off a building, would you? That’s what we need to ask ourselves since Paul writes: **but as for you continue in what you have learned.**

Rather than patting ourselves on the back and saying we’re better than the godless world because we belong to a church body that faithfully teaches the Bible, let’s ask ourselves how *faithfully* we have **continued in the word** as individuals.

We confess all the Bible *is* God’s inspired Word, true in its every part: good. We say Scripture alone makes us wise to know and trust Jesus as our Savior from sin:

very good. We admit only the Bible can show us how God wants us to live and actually give us the power through faith in Jesus to live in thanks for Him: also good.

But since we rightly say the Bible does all these things, why don't we use His Word more than we do? Why don't we read and intently study it like our life depended on it? Why do we find it so much easier to point our fingers at those who "obviously" reject God's Word than to freely admit our own failures to actually do all His Word says?

Why can we so often be so afraid to speak to others the Word, to share it with friends and family? Why is it so tempting to just want to avoid conflict and struggle and go along with the world's ways instead of God's Word?

Why? Because, we share something in common with all who reject God's Word: an old sinful nature that gets in the way of our being as faithful to God's Word as we ought. Sin that means we too deserve God's righteous judgment of death and hell.

The very fact we can admit these sins to God and each other gives us a reason to thank God that **His word works**. His Word works repentance: **rebuking** our sin, showing how we've displeased God and earned his punishment.

And thank God His Word works faith, **encouraging** us to flee to the God of undeserved love who gave His Word not to destroy us, but to save us. Just as it says: **These (words) are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.**

Rejoice that the Word works to show us our Savior from every sin. It points us to Jesus, the Son of God who is the **Word** who **became flesh and made his dwelling among us** to rescue us.

Christ stood between us and what we deserved for our every sin against God, every failure to be perfectly faithful with His Word. Jesus carried our guilt and our punishment to the cross so that with His death He gives us forgiveness full and free. With his rising He declares us not guilty and opens up the joys of eternal life to us.

Because the Holy Spirit has worked through His powerful Word as He brings it to our hearts through Bible, Baptism and the Supper, what Paul said of Timothy is true for you: **how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.**

That is a gift that no amount of insult or persecution can take away from you.

So, **Continue in God's Pure Word:** hear, learn, live and share it, because God's Word, pointing you to Jesus, God's Word works, now and forever. Amen.

*The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*