

W512_2_Tim.2-15_and_right_division.mp3

[00:00:02] This is a recording made in the Chapel of the Open Book and is number 12 of the series entitled Spotlight. I'm fairly certain that if I were to say to the folks who are assembled in this chapel, will you quote two Timothy 2:15 without opening your Bibles that everybody here and it's possible that most of you, if not all of you are listening to this tape recording could do so. And it's the point that I have in mind particularly, is in those words, without opening your Bible, because you see even two Timothy 2:15 has got a context and without a context you can suddenly get off the rails very much with regard to any part of this teaching of Scripture without the guidance of the context. The Apostle Paul didn't write to Paul the apostle Paul didn't write to Timothy and tell him to rightly divide the word of truth so that he would appreciate the different dispensation. Now, we've had to do that. I'm not saying this isn't true. It is. And we reaped a wonderful harvest of truth by observing the fact that there are different callings, different spheres and different aspects of the second coming and so on. But on the other hand, we may have cheated ourselves a little bit by lifting the words out of their context and never bothering to see why the Apostle was writing to Timothy in this strain. Now, before we go to the context of two Timothy, I would like just to refer to two passages in the Old Testament where the principle of division is introduced, just to show you that it is used in Scripture, quite apart from the one definite emphasis that we put on it, particularly with regard to the changing in dispensations.

[00:02:01] And the first we have looked at when we were dealing another one of these spotlight studies in connection with the problem of the leading of the Lord. But I mustn't take it for granted that everyone who heard that will be listening to this, and even if they did, the repetition I trust, will not be a vain one. So for a moment we look at Proverbs chapter three, and then we go back to the Book of Genesis. Proverbs Chapter three. The point that we're dealing with is the fact that the principle of right division is not limited to the observing of the differences between one dispensation and another, but has a very practical use as well. Proverbs three verses five and six Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. The poetic element in Hebrew poetry is not so much the rhyming of sound, but the rhyming of teaching, the rhyming of thought, which is a deeper thing. And so trust in the Lord is balanced by the word leaning and good understanding. And the all thine heart is balanced by understanding and these are complimentary one to the other.

[00:03:34] But we come now to the next verse, which is the one in question. In all thy ways acknowledge Him and he shall direct thy paths. And I am sure I said when we were dealing with this before, that Timothy being the son of a Greek father living in the place that he did, and at the time that he did, he would have the Bible translated into Greek, which we call the Septuagint. And we are told in this two Timothy that his grandmother and his mother were Christians, and that from a child he had known the Holy Scriptures. And the character of the Proverbs is such that no Christian mother, especially in those days, would have omitted the proverbs for the guidance of this young son. So the moment Timothy received the word from Paul, rightly dividing the word of truth, he knew that it was already there embedded in this proverb. So I'll read the verse again, as Timothy would have read it in all thy ways, acknowledge him, and he shall rightly divide thy powers. And of course, that shows you that the right division of Scripture is not a matter of. Very deep classical education. In fact, it is what is put in practice by every person who is able to thread their way through the traffic and the lanes by driving a car and watching the signpost as they go.

[00:05:08] Rightly dividing, Rightly dividing the pathway all the way through. And you will see that it's a very practical affair. Anybody here or now leaving that turn to one that's not so obvious in the book of Genesis, Chapter four. Chapter four. Of course, as you will already know, before you turn to the book, has to deal with those who were expelled from the Garden of Eden and the dreadful thing that happened in the murder of Abel by his brother, Cain. This passage has suffered at the hands of novelists and others. They have invented the statement, the brand of Cain, and most people who do not know the Bible will stick you out that God put a mark on the forehead of Cain and branded him as a murderer. Whereas you will see that it says that God set a mark. And the word there is the very same word as a token that was set for Noah, a rainbow in the heavens. It wasn't branded on his forehead. God set him something that would enable him to still trust, even though he was banished, even though he had sinned deeply and even though he was suffering the consequences of it. And then the other passage sin lies at the door that's become proverbial or lies at the door of so and so, charging him with something. And by so doing, they robbed us of the essential teaching of this passage.

[00:06:49] So let's try to put it back again and see also where right division comes into the story. First of all, let's read a few verses. Chapter four. Now, Adam knew Eve, his

wife, and she conceived and bare Cain and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord. Now, the word Cain and the word gotten are just the noun and verb. If anyone says what was the language that was spoken by Adam and Eve, you say, Well, if she called his name Cain and the verb means to gain. That seems obvious, doesn't it? Or again. And she again buries Brother Abel. And it doesn't tell you what the meaning of IBO was. But that means vanity, because he didn't live a full life. And Abel was a keeper of sheep. But Cain was a tiller of the ground. So the story leaps from the childhood till their manhood. They're not dealing with the life history. And in the process of time or in the course of days, the end of the days, as though there were some fixed time that they knew of it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. But Abel, he also brought of the first things of his flock that also needs to be put in its correct place. It's not so much.

[00:08:14] He also did something, but he did something also. Both of them may have brought an offering. But Abel brought also that which made the offering acceptable. And that was all the difference between Cain and Abel. They should have known. And they did know what had happened in the Garden of Eden. Our first parents did the same thing. They clothed themselves with leaves and those leaves were stricken, taken from them, and they were clothed by God with coats of skin. And that would demonstrate that they needed now the sacrificial element to make them, as it were, any way fit to stand once more in the presence of God. So able. As the New Testament says, offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. And Cain did not bring the sacrifice that was now the one that should have been brought, but brought just the fruit of the ground because he was a tiller of the soil. Now, God reasons with him. After the dreadful happening had taken place. But Kane said, and his offering he had Notrillionspect and Kane was very rough and his countenance fell. And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wrath? And why is their countenance fallen? Now here comes the verse where the word right division occurs, but not in either the Hebrew or in our English. If thou do it well, shalt thou not be accepted. And if their dough is not well and has not rightly divided, that little bit slipped in.

[00:10:03] You see what division is not a trifling thing, is it? It made all the difference between Abel's acceptance and kind rejection. You have not rightly divided Cain. The offerings that are brought to the Lord. Oh, it's right, Cain, that you should bring of the fruit of the ground that you have cultivated. God wants you to do that, but that does not

make you accepted before God. It's the one offering of Christ, the sacrifice that meant the shedding of blood that makes us, first of all, accepted. And then only then does our own puny works have a place. So right. Division occurs even in Genesis four. And so he goes on to say, If thou do this, well, shalt thou not be accepted. And if thou do is not well, and if thou hast not rightly divided. Now this passage sin lies at the door as caused some confusion. The word sin, if you will look say for one passage only, but you can find any amount of them. Exodus 29, verse 14. Exodus 29, verse 14. Reads like this. But the flesh of the bullock and his skin and his dung shalt. They are burned with fire without the camp. It is a sin offering. Now that sin offering is just a word sin. Just the word sin. The word sin and the word sin offering are synonymous words in the scriptures.

[00:11:45] So much so that it seems as though God says, Wherever I see sin, I see also the need of a sin offering. So when it says sin lies at the door, it's not like the novelist makes it that this thing is now threatening you. Look again at the word light. See light at the door. This is the very word that we find in Psalm 23. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. It doesn't mean to couch and be ready to spring on someone like a fierce animal. God said to Cain, Look, there's the door of the Garden of Eden. There are the Cherubim and the cherubim were there not described, but they are described later on. The man, the lion, the ox, the eagle. There was men and his dominion lost to him. But preserved in type. And now the preservation looks to Christ to bring it about. And this is all being transacted at the door of the tabernacle. And he says to him, a sin offering is lying at the door. If you will only bring that and bring that as I instructed you. Unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. So what I'm trying to do, you see, is just this by these two passages in the Old Testament to say that right division is not limited to the application of the principle to whether it's the dispensation of the kingdom or the dispensation of the mystery.

[00:13:26] It is all yes. I'm not taking away from that. It's the backbone of our witness. But it comes into practical things as well. So now perhaps you will turn back to two Timothy and actually look and see what the context says that introduces this very word to Timothy and why it was said to him. Two. Timothy. Chapter two. He says in verse 14. Of these things put them in remembrance. Charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. So here we have the word. Two Timothy 2:15 introduced by a warning that there may be some teaching

that's being passed along to one or the other that would be subverting the hearers. So right. Division was expressed here by God to Timothy to rightly divide whatever the doctrine it was that was being discussed. We can use it in all manner of ways that we do, but we lose if we forget. It's got a context here. And see, in the first case, it was evidently an intrusion coming into the early church of some line of doctrine and teaching, which had a subverting element. I think all the way down the age. And the apostle has warned us that these things will take place. And so he says, subverting the year. Study to show thyself approved unto God a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

[00:15:15] Full stop. Chapter book and go home. Oh, no, we haven't finished yet, friends. We haven't finished. He says rightly, Divide the word of truth. But Shun. So rightly dividing is one side of the story and shunning is the other. The positive right division of truth is what you must be after, and you must be aware of these subversive things. These profane things shun profane and vain babblings. An awful words to have to speak about someone who is practically a teacher in the church who has been responsible for some of these things which the Lord is now witnessing against by this statement. Shun profane and vain babblings. Thought would increase to more ungodliness. So there's an evil element now coming in. And friends, you cannot entertain wrong doctrine without it having an evil effect. And this is the doctrine according to godliness. Remember, it's emphasized and this is the doctrine of God as found in the scriptures. It will come from another source for the evil one who is antagonistic to God is a very religious being, and most of his activities are associated with worship, which he desires for himself to take away also from the Son of God. And so he says here shun profane. You know, the word English word profane is borrowed from the word Fein, which means a temple.

[00:16:54] Profane means outside the temple, not inside. And so he says, Shun profane and vain, empty babblings, for they would increase unto all ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker. Terrible word, isn't it? Gangri. Kent. What are the dreadful words that we still have to use? Fancy doctrine being taught by somebody in the church that if it's left to go on, will do that terrific destructive work of eating like a cancer. Now, these things are written for our learning and we can't expect to be exempt from these things if they took place under the very eye of the apostle Paul and men like Timothy in charge. So this is a word for us to be on the watchtower so that we see in advance

anything that may be of this destructive nature. And their word will eat as doth a canker. And they be knives. The two who are responsible. Of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus. Now, what have they been teaching? What have they been saying? Well, here it is. Who, concerning the truth, have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already. Well, what can they mean? If, like me, the resurrection of Christ. That's a glorious truth, isn't it? The resurrection of Christ is past already. Blessed be God. So this can only be the resurrection of God's people. But what do they mean when they say the resurrection of God's people is past already? Well, it's what some have entertained and some have taught that if you attain unto the prize of the high calling of God, as mentioned in Philippians, which is called the resurrection, out from among the dead, when you die, you fall asleep.

[00:18:56] Or perhaps you don't even fall asleep. I don't know exactly what they say, but when you die, you are immediately raised in that resurrection. And that's been going on right the way down this nearly 2000 years since the days of the Apostle Paul. In fact, I met I met someone years ago who maintained that if only they were permitted to open the graves of anyone who had attained to this prize of the high calling, after three days, they'd find it empty. But of course, people can say a thing like that because such an examination is not possible. But you see, we must face this, that anyone who has got a doctrine that involves a resurrection that's past already is here in view. And there are some folks of. We love them. We recognize them as fellow believers are sort of playing with this teaching. And therefore I thought it might be wise to invite this warning sound, lest we should say, Oh, that's a good idea. When the Apostle Paul spoke about himself, he says in Chapter four. Verse six, I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand.

[00:20:13] Both those words I used in Philippians. He said, If I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I join. And he says, I would desire I would choose to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. But he says it's come now. I'm now about to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand. Now, some have said that when the apostle said. He would choose to depart and be with Christ. Let me to say that the moment he departed, he would be with Christ. What I remember. All along the Gobi Desert. I forget. 30 odd years ago, I was in Canada taking a series of meetings at Toronto, and at the last meeting we had together, I said to them these words as far as I can remember. I have been very, very blessed to be with you folks and have this

privilege of opening up the Word of God. I've enjoyed every minute of it. But I said, Now we've come to the last meeting. You won't misunderstand me if I say I would rather depart and be with my wife and family. But nobody's going to get up in the meeting and say, Oh, I see. The moment you depart, you'll be there. There'll be no travelling down the Saint Lawrence to Quebec. There'll be no getting on board a ship and going across the Atlantic.

[00:21:34] There'll be no getting off at Southampton and getting a train to London. There'll be no getting one from London at all. I said Yes, it's all there, but I still say I would be willing now to depart and be with my wife and family. And so the apostle, he didn't say I would choose to depart. And the moment I depart, I'll be there in glory. Oh, no, he says here in chapter four. I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith henceforth, not immediately, but henceforth. And he tells you when henceforth is laid up for me, a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge will give me, not immediately. I am put to death by Nero, but at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing or have loved his appearing. Well, that's that main statement. And if you turn back to Philippians, where he's used this reference to the prize and his own association with it, you will see that he says in Chapter three. Verse 20 and 21. For our conversation. And most of you know that the word conversation here is the word citizenship. Conversation now to us means just sitting, having a chat. But conversation meant in the earlier days, a manner of life, and so was a possible translation.

[00:23:13] But the true translation is citizenship and it would have a great bearing upon the folks at Philippi. For Philippi was a colony. And a colony then was not like a colony. Now it was a miniature Rome. I had all the privileges of being a Roman citizen except one, and that was being in Rome itself. So he said, Our citizenship is in heaven and you'll understand that, Philippians and know what I mean. Our citizenship is in heaven from whence we look for the Savior. Now, does anyone say, I don't know what from whence means? Surely it refers to his coming. He is there and from whence he is coming. Well, you can't have Christ coming every five minutes because someone who is overcome and the and has got the prize in front of him and will take part in an out resurrection that makes it absolutely silly. So he says, from whence we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. And what would he do? He shall change our vile body or

He shall change this body of our humiliation. But anyhow, the change which must take place before the resurrection is fully enjoyed and entered, will take place when our our Savior leaves that citizenship in heaven and returns to take his people to himself. That it may be fashioned like unto his body of glory, glorious body, according to the working, whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself.

[00:24:55] Well, now, most of you will be very conscious that I am not aiming at a man of straw. There is floating about statements with regard to this question of the resurrection that would lead some who are not well primed in the scriptures to perhaps believe that every time a believer in this particular truth dies, he is immediately raised into this new calling, one after the other. Well, what does the apostle mean when he warns Timothy about the resurrection which is passed already? He must refer to the resurrection of believers. He can't refer to the resurrection of Christ. And so I felt somehow that it might be a word in season to all of us, if by the mercy of God, those of you who are listening to me say, Well, I've never heard this doctrine, well, don't think it's a waste of time. It may put you on your guard if you say, I've never been misled to these awful ideas or be thankful you haven't. So give an opportunity for these messages to anticipate perhaps sometimes what might be threatening in the days to come. And if I have attained my object, it will mean that when we use the word rightly dividing the Word of truth, we shall not merely limit it to that which has to do with our own special dispensational difference from the dispensation of others.

[00:26:30] But it will go right through our examination of the Word of God, rightly dividing all the way so that we are approved unto God. And these. And these who are spoken of. You remember? What? Both ordered teachers apparently in the church at first. And we must not think that any one of us is not possible to be assailed by the evil one in this direction. And so I leave it with you and pray that we may see by the reference to Proverbs, the reference to Genesis four that the principle of right division is wider than perhaps some of us have been led to think, and here is an opportunity to rectify it and to use it as a principle all the time. Wherever an idea is put before you in the Scriptures rightly divide the word of truth, see that it harmonizes with what God has revealed elsewhere and takes its right place in the scheme of things. For not one of us would entertain the thought of teaching that would eat like a canker. And yet these men apparently have done so. And if I fail to make the impression it must be because of my inability. But I do trust that the spirit of God may lay hold of your minds and hearts, turn

you to the Scriptures themselves, ponder these passages, and be thereby fortified against the possibility of being misled.