

## Steadfast Living: Simplicity

Just in case you missed it  
Just in case it went in one ear and out the other  
Just in case you day dreamed  
Just in case your memory is really, really, really short  
Just in case you zoned out  
I am going to say it again.  
If you are a Christian this morning  
If you are letting the light of Jesus shine  
If you desire to live a godly life  
**If you are a disciple of Jesus Christ, you will be persecuted.**  
Paul mentioned it in verse 11 - my persecutions.  
In verse 11 he mentions Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra.  
He says in all three places he was persecuted.  
Timothy would know that experience well.  
In Acts 16 we know that Timothy lived in Lystra.  
He had also spent much time among the people of Iconium.  
Timothy had undoubtedly seen Paul suffer for his faith.  
In verse 12 Paul says anyone who lives in Christ will be persecuted.  
Timothy may have witnessed Paul's beating in Philippi.  
He may have heard Paul and Silas singing in prison.  
**Persecution is the ordinary life of the Christian.**  
Expect it, anticipate it, accept it, even embrace it.

So, who wants to get in line with Jesus?  
Who wants to go on record as being a Christian?  
Who will "stand strong" and boldly confess "I love Jesus"?  
Who will exemplify the life of trust in Jesus?  
Who will live in obedience to Jesus' Lordship?  
Not many, and that is another reason why the laborers are few.  
**The labourers are few because few disciples are content with ordinary life.**  
**The majority of people, Christians included, seek the extraordinary.**  
We want more glitz, more pizzazz.  
We like the look of glamour and fame.  
These things appeal to us.  
**We want to go bigger and faster.**  
**We prefer to bypass the struggles of faith and Christ.**  
This is a dominant attitude in the Church today.

**I Paul told Timothy to live his life simply.**  
He said to Timothy, "You have seen me in action."  
**"You have observed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life." (vs. 10)**  
**Timothy had seen Paul's faith, patience, love, steadfastness.**  
These were all ordinary, simple, every-day occurrences.  
These were not earth-shattering, crowd-attracting qualities.  
Timothy had seen Paul's simple, steadfast life that **STOOD STRONG** everywhere.  
We tend to think of Paul as extraordinary.  
But he wasn't.  
**Paul was an ordinary Christian.**  
**"Extraordinary Christian" is a contradiction of terms.**  
We do nothing more than what Jesus enables us to do as Christians.  
**The only way we reach the world for Jesus is with Jesus.**

Mike Mason comments on the ordinary life.

He says that "Everyone has an ordinary life.

"The Pope has an ordinary life.

"Movie stars and rock stars have ordinary lives.

"Presidents and great artists and workers of miracles have ordinary lives.

"The person you are most jealous of, or most admire, has an ordinary life.

"Their life is every bit as ordinary as yours.

"There is no escaping the ordinary life.

"It is where life is lived.

And that is where Paul chose to live his life.

As a disciple of Jesus Christ Paul chose to live simply.

That was his aim in life.

That was what steadied him and enabled him to **STAND STRONG.**

It was the simple things that filled his day.

But this was not automatic.

## **II Paul told Timothy to live his life uncluttered.**

Everywhere Paul went he was hounded by clutterers.

Jesus was too.

People tried to inflict 613 rules and regulations on Jesus.

He reduced all those laws to two.

They tried to do the same with Paul.

They wanted to complicate his message with the law.

Paul preached "by grace are you saved through faith".

So simple!

Simplicity is lost in the desire for clutter and complexity.

I saw this drive toward complexity several years ago.

It was actually while I was vacationing in Calgary.

We were heading for the Calgary airport at 6:00 a.m.

It was still quite dark in Calgary.

As we drove Country Hills toward the airport I looked at all the houses.

Lights were shining through the windows as people struggled toward the day.

I commented on the scenario.

People up before dawn to head to work to pay for houses they never live in.

I wondered what the point was.

Yes I was on the road too, but technically I was on vacation.

But I was heading to the airport where a jet would whisk me back to PEI.

I was facing a deadline to start working the next day.

I needed to get home to resume and maintain my life of clutter.

I rushed to get back to the long hours of ministry.

I was racing through the day so my life could go from bad to worse.

I had major stock in the deception that busy is good.

I have to ask myself, is this the godly life of Christ to which Paul referred?

What is this life Paul exhorted Timothy to experience that results in persecution?

I don't see it anywhere on my horizon.

I see rush and scramble.

I see Christians blending in with the world.

It is a good idea to read, on a regular basis about Jesus cleansing the temple.

When Jesus cleansed the Temple it was filled with thieving money changers.

There was the marketing of sacrificial animals.

The Temple had become a place of crooked business instead of prayer.

But something else was happening in the temple.

It had become a place where people simply walked through.

The court of the gentiles is where most of the commotion existed.

The Gentiles were people who needed God.

God wanted to meet with the lost of the world.

Any opportunity to meet God was clogged and stifled.

There was no way for a Gentile to experience God's presence.

**The Gentile court yard of worship had become a shortcut.**

People should have walked around the temple to get through town.  
Instead they turned the courtyard into a street.

Imagine our sanctuary being a short cut.

Imagine the distraction and the confusion.

It's worse than someone leaving to use the facilities.

**Life in the temple had become cluttered.**

Life under the law was cluttered.

Life in general was cluttered.

Today we are even more cluttered.

Would we be receptive to Jesus' cleansing today?

I fear not.

We have attached ourselves to the clutter.

Life isn't normal without clutter.

**"Many of our churches have become cluttered, so cluttered that people have a difficult time encountering the simple and powerful message of Christ. So cluttered that many people are busy *doing* church instead of *being* church." (Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger, *Simple Church*)**

Paul wanted to remind Timothy of his childhood.

What was that like?

It was uncluttered.

Apparently Paul knew something about Timothy's earlier life.

**"How from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." (v. 15)**

That was the life Paul was calling Timothy to experience.

That was the life of the disciple.

**A cluttered life will eventually topple.**

**A cluttered life cannot stand strong because God is pushed out.**

We need a life immersed in God's word that leads to faith.

It was the use of God's word that took Paul through persecution.

It was the call to the simple life that Paul reminded Timothy to hear.

One Lord, one faith, one baptism.

**"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD" (Deut. 6:4)**

**"The LORD will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one LORD, and his name the only name." (Zech. 14:9)**

**"And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:" (Mark 12:29)**

**"Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live." (1 Cor. 8:6)**

**"There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called— one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all" (Eph. 4:4-6)**

And Paul wanted to remind Timothy why his roots in Scripture are important.

**"All Scripture is inspired by God."**

**It is God's word that makes a person complete.**

**It is God's word that makes us mature.**

**It is God's word that equips us for good work.**

**God's word keeps us on track in life.**

**God's word makes righteousness a reality in our lives.**

**God's word is that powerful two edged sword that pierces to the heart.**

Paul never used programs to do the work of evangelism.

He used God's word.

**"All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth." (Col. 1:6)**

Closing Song

VBS Theme Song