

## **Tough on What?**

**THIS MORNING**, we begin at verse 10. We look at it in two parts --- and then we will back up to where we left off last week:

**3:10,11** Now YOU followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, persecutions, and sufferings ...

Paul: aware of his role as an example ~ calling Timothy to follow: and we are called to follow, too! (3:16)  
So let's see what we can learn from Paul's example. **Let's start with the spectacular stuff: his sufferings.**

**3:10,11** Now YOU followed my ...perseverance, persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me!

### **PAUL AS AN EXAMPLE TO US ALL**

#### **#1 Antioch**

**Acts 13:50** But the Jews incited the devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city, and instigated a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district

→ Here, Paul and Barnabas successfully flee → **"The Lord rescued me!"**

#### **#2 Iconium**

**Acts 14:2** But the Jews who disbelieved stirred up the minds of the Gentiles and embittered them against the brethren

**Acts 14:5,6** And when an attempt was made by both the Gentiles and the Jews with rulers, to mistreat and to stone them, they became aware of it and fled to the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe, and the surrounding region

→ This time, Paul and Barnabas successfully flee. → **"The Lord rescued me!"** .... *They were talking of stoning me!*

#### **#3 Lystra**

**Acts 14:19** But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having won over the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead

→ And then this time, Paul is dragged away from his own execution, presumed dead! → **"The Lord rescued me!"**

#### **1. Paul, as an example to us all, was tough on himself**

**Acts 20:22-24** "And now, behold, bound by the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.

He was "paying the price" → "suffering hardship like a good soldier of Christ Jesus"

So then we wonder: was he **tough on other people?** (unsympathetic? Unconcerned?) **tough to be with?** (intolerant?) **tough to like?**

#### **2. Paul, as an example to us all, was tough on foolishness**

**vs. 23** Refuse foolish and ignorant speculations "Refuse" is always a tough line!

**What does this mean?** A couple of things!

~ **First, we have to recognize** that sort of stuff so that we can plainly refuse to discuss it!

For example???? Not every topic qualifies. In fact, hardly any topic qualifies in all cases!

Some subjects deserve discussion, sometimes! ????? → "they produce quarrels" [*Jit.* "fights"]

~ **Second, we have to come up with ways of saying, No!** *"I'm thinking it might be better for us to change the subject."  
"Let's not get into a big debate about that just now!"*

**No need to be rude: in fact, an obligation not to be! 2:22** "...pursue ... LOVE and peace..."

**3:10** Now YOU followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, LOVE...

→ **How** [and **WHY**] you do what you do is about as important as **WHAT** you do! → HOW = "peace"  
WHY = "love"

**vs. 23** ... refuse ignorant and foolish speculations...

**vs. 24** Be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition

**James 3:16-18** But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

Words, actions, motives = seed → If we get this **right**, there's **peace!** / If we get this **wrong**, there's **conflict!**

So Paul was **tough on himself** and **tough on foolishness**. Was he **tough on fools?** (**Tough on foolishness, soft on fools?**)

### **3. Paul was tough on one sort of fool!**

**vs. 24** Be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition

**Verses 1-9**

**vs. 5** Avoid such men as these...

**What does this mean?** A couple of things! ~ **First, we have to recognize** this sort of person so that we can plainly get on with avoiding them! [lit. "turn away from"]

~ **Second, we have to come up with ways of explaining ourselves.** Because obeying 3:5 can look like disobeying 2:23,25 [Not to the people we are avoiding. That would mean that we are not avoiding them!]

*"I'm sorry to say that, in my opinion, it's for the best that I stop having anything more to do with him"*

*"WHY?" "Let's look at 2 Timothy 3 together" (Also, Titus 3:10,11 and II Thessalonians 3:14,15)*

NOW, one more question. HOW did Paul do it? How could he be SO tough?

### **4. Paul was so tough because he was so sure that God is the good & wise & sovereign ruler of the world.**

In complete control of all the details / of all the results / of all the limits.

So he could, and if we follow his example, we can humbly leave to Him what happens next!

e.g. #1 **2 Timothy 2:25-26** ... if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

e.g. #2 **2 Timothy 3:11** "...what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me!

**Acts 14:20-22** But while the disciples stood around him, he got up and entered the city. The next day he went away with Barnabas to Derbe. After they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."

**2 Timothy 3: 12,13** Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

**2 Timothy 1:8** Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God,

**2 Timothy 2:3** Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

#### **PAUL AS AN EXAMPLE TO US ALL**

1. Paul was tough on himself

2. Paul was tough on foolishness

3. Paul was tough on one sort of fool!

4. Paul was so tough because he was so sure that God is the good & wise & sovereign ruler of the world.

We sign on for whatever is involved in being the Lord's servants, and we are fine with leaving to Him to decide the details of the story. For He is good and He is wise!

***Be peaceful, be joyful, be tough and pay the price!***