

## 2 Timothy 2:14-26

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Sermon text and audio available online at [www.waitara.anglican.asn.au](http://www.waitara.anglican.asn.au)

“World’s most useless expensive items”

- **1. PPT** – Damien Hirst’s sculpture of a Skull. 8601 diamonds. A 52 carat stone on the forehead. Sold for \$100 million.
- **2. PPT** – A pair of shoes by Stuart Weizman. They have a four and a half inch stiletto heel and are encased with 595 carats of platinum set diamonds. Their price? \$2,000,000.
- **3. PPT** – Action Comics #1, published in 1938 is the most expensive comic book in the world. It is considered the first true Superhero comic. It was sold for \$500,000
- **4. PPT** – This is the world's most expensive teddy bear. Its fur is made of real gold, and eyes are encrusted with sapphires and diamonds. \$84,000

What item in your home is the most **valuable**? Now, let me ask you: what item is the most **useful**? The most **valuable** thing you own might be a painting. Or a piece of jewellery. The most **useful** thing you own might be a computer. Or a pencil. Or a fridge...

To God, every person is valuable. Because he made them. The question God asks us today is:

### **5. PPT – Are you useful?**

Let’s have a look at 2 Timothy 2, from verse 20-21...

<sup>20</sup> *In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. <sup>21</sup> If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.*

The house Paul is talking about is God’s house. His church. And the items in God’s house fall into two categories. There are the valuable “gold and silver” items – noble items. Clean items. Holy items. Useful items. Items that are ready to do good work.

Then there are the “wood or clay” items. Ignoble items. Not clean. Not holy. Not useful. Not ready to do good work.

And what Paul is saying to Timothy is this: There are different types of **people** in God’s house. There are noble, useful, clean, holy people. And there are unholy, unclean, un-useful people.

### **6. PPT – What makes us useful to God?**

Come with me back to verse 15 – Paul says to Timothy:

<sup>15</sup> *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.*

For Timothy to be **useful** as a minister of God, for Timothy to be approved, he needs to be unashamed of God’s word and able to handle it correctly. Because in Timothy’s church, just like many churches today, there are people like Hymenaeus and Philetus, who wander from the truth. And when people in God’s church wander away from the truth of God’s word, they destroy the faith of other people. They become ignoble. Unclean. For a minister to be useful, he must be able to handle the Word of God well. There are two sides to this::

1. He must be able to **teach** the truth from God's Word.
2. He must be able to deal with false teaching. Because, verse 17, false teaching spreads like gangrene. It infects people and destroys their faith.

So as a church, you need to ensure your minister is accountable to these things. But what are YOU called to do?

### **7a. title PPT – “The Church”**

Yes, we need ministers who can handle God's Word well, who can teach the truth and correct false teaching. But how do you know if that's happening?

How do you know if what your minister teaches is correct? How do you know you can trust **me** for example?

### **7b. sub heading PPT – “Handle God's Word well”**

Because... YOU handle God's Word well! **You** read the Bible. **You** study God's Word yourself. We want a church who, if a minister says something that is against God's word, people will stand up and speak!

**III** – I had a friend from another religion who converted to Christianity. I asked him why. He said “My religion made no sense. I had so many questions about the book we were taught from. So I asked my teacher. He said: “Just believe what I say and do not question me.” For many years I kept asking questions and was told to stop. Yet it still did not make sense. I saw contradictions and inconsistencies in that faith. So when I arrived in Australia, I looked at the Bible. And someone taught me about Jesus from the Bible. And they answered my questions. And it made sense.

How do you know that your minister is handling the word of God correctly and not leading you astray? You ask. You question. You investigate. You study it yourself.

### **7c. PPT – picture of Counterfeit bill**

Apparently, if you want to learn how to recognise a counterfeit bill, there is one sure way of training. You spend a lot of time looking at a real one. You take a \$50 or \$100 bill and you look at it. A lot. Over and over again. You study it carefully, for hundreds of hours. And when a fake one comes along... you'll see the difference. Usually. Some fakes are REALLY good. And you might need some help sometimes. But most times, you can spot the fake if you've been looking at the real thing long enough.

So, as a person in God's church, how do you spot false teaching? How do you tell if your minister is handling the Word of God correctly? You study it yourself. You look at the real thing for a long time so you know when a fake comes along.

First, we need to know how to handle God's Word well. But second of all, we also need to know how to handle our OWN words properly.

### **7d. sub heading PPT – “Handle your OWN words well”**

Look with me from verse 22:

<sup>22</sup> *Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.* <sup>23</sup> *Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels.* <sup>24</sup> *And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.*

If we want to keep to the truth of God's Word, if we want to be pure vessels, holy, set apart for God and walking straight with his Word, then we also need to get **away** from evil. Flee evil desires. And pursue righteousness. That's what we want from our teachers, and that's what we want from ourselves. Forget foolish arguments and quarrels. In other words, we will sometimes hear silly arguments about God's word. You will have times when you disagree with people about God's Word. Believers and non believers. And sometimes you may be wrong. Other times you may be right. But if you want to handle God's word correctly, you also need to handle your **own words** correctly. We need to speak with kindness and gentleness. And trust God – verse 25:

<sup>25</sup> *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,*

And I believe that this is not just true about God's Word. It's true about the way people in our church **act** on God's word. We might disagree with something that's said, but we might also disagree about something that's **done**, or the way someone **treated** us. If we want to pursue the truth and pursue righteousness, then we need to be people who do not quarrel, but are kind and patient and **servants** to others.

What's the point in having the truth of God's word in our ears and in our hearts, if we cannot be servants of that word of grace and truth and love?

I am grateful as I read this passage today.

First, I'm grateful that we are in a church where there is accountability for ministers and teachers, and where God's Word is believed and trusted above the word of people. A church where we accept God's word as a Word without error. His word is the final authority.

Second, I'm grateful to be in a church where people speak as servants. We're not perfect, but I think we do pretty well! We have many good teachers. We have people engaged in God's Word, and we have a culture of kindness and gentleness. This is a good place to be!

So perhaps my encouragement to you today is this: Do not become complacent! Do not be comfortable! Continue to test what is said and taught by your ministers, teachers and leaders, against God's Word. When we do that, then we will CONTINUE to be vessels that are noble – holy, set apart for God, clean and useful to the Master, prepared to do any good work.

Let's pray.