

VESSELS OF HONOR

Paul reminded Timothy that there were two types of vessels or Christians in the Church: “Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels (skeuos), but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor.” (2Tim.2:20)

Two types are identified in the Greek language of 2Tim.2:20 – “not only (ouk monos) but also (alla kai) vessels”- “And some (hos) [relative pronoun] to honor and some (hos) to dishonor.”

The question that Paul addressed in our lesson text is: “what makes a vessel honorable or dishonorable whether it is made of gold and silver or wood and earthenware (clay)?”

The **doctrinal point** of our lesson text is stated in (2Tim.2:21) “A vessel for honor is one that is cleansed, sanctified, useful to the Master, and prepared for every good work.”

This lesson will study five aspects of Vessels of Honor
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1. The vessels of dishonor were Christians who followed the teachings of apostate teachers like Hymenaeus and Philetus.

“Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus.” (2Tim.2:17) [NIV]

“Who have wandered away from the truth, they say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some.” (2Tim.2:18) [NIV]

These were the believers of Asia who have deserted Paul and his grace teachings (2Tim.1:15; 2 Pet.2:1).

2. The vessels of honor were Christians who followed the true teachings of grace teachers like Paul.

“Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.” (2Tim.1:13-14)

“And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.” (2Tim.2:2)

3. The Christian engaged in false teachings must cleanse himself from it.

“**Therefore** (oun / inferential particle / doctrinal point that needs to be made), **if** (3cc / volitional) **a man** (tis / anyone / silver and gold or wood and earthenware) **cleanses** (ekkathairo / a.a.subj.3ps / thoroughly purge) **himself** from (apo+ablative of separation) **these things**, he will be (eimi / f.a.ind.3ps) a vessel of honor.” (2Tim.2:21)

“From these things” is a reference to separating from false teaching (2Tim.2:18) -”See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.” (Col.2:8; 2 Tim.2:26)

Paul may have had in mind the cleansing of household vessels in the same way Jesus did when He addressed the false teachings of the Pharisees in the fourth woe of Matt.23.

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisees, **first clean the inside** of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also.” (Matt.23:25-26)

4. How is the dishonorable Christian cleansed (ekkathairo) from false teachings in order to be restored to a vessel of honor?

Note these three steps of cleansing – “That each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor.” (1 Thess.4:4)

First step is confession of sin (1 John 1:9) and restoration to teaching ministry of truth by indwelling Holy Spirit (Jn.14:26; 1 Jn.2:20-21, 27).

Second step is to put off the false teaching (Eph.4:22; 1 Cor.5:6-8).

Third step is to put on true teaching (Eph.4:23-24; Acts 20:32).

5. Paul teaches that this cleansing is part of sanctification in CWL.

“If a man cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, **sanctified (hagiozo / perf.p.ptc.asn)**, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.”

This sanctification is a Christian being set apart unto holiness by cleansing himself from false teachings to true teaching.

“Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth.” (Jn.17:17)

“That He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word.” (Eph.5:26)

This work of sanctification has made the honorable vessel - “**useful** (euchrestos / very serviceable in the plan of God) for the Master (to despotes)” and “prepared (hetoimazo / perf.p.ptc. asn) for **every good work** (agathos / divine production).” (2Tim.2:21)

The doctrinal conclusion to our lesson is this:

A VESSEL OF HONOR IS A CHRISTIAN WHO HAS BEEN CLEANSED FROM FALSE TEACHINGS, SANCTIFIED IN THE TRUTH OF GOD’S WORD, SERVICEABLE TO THE MASTER IN THE PLAN OF GOD, AND PREPARED FOR ALL DIVINE PRODUCTION.