

8/8/21 Sunday Worship Service Message (2 Tim 2)

## A Worker Approved By God

2 Timothy 2:15

“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”

We give thanks to God for His blessing upon GLEF 2021. God has been speaking to us through many programs prepared, especially through the study of the entire book of Mark's gospel, through which we could learn what the true leadership is through Jesus. I personally thank God for giving me this chance to share today's message with you on 2 Timothy 2:15, through which the Apostle Paul teaches Timothy also about spiritual leadership. To Timothy, Apostle Paul was his spiritual father, Bible teacher, and coworker for God's mission. Paul, knowing Timothy's strengths and weaknesses, eagerly prays for him and instructs him in verse 15, which reads, **“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”** Through this prayerful and careful teaching, Paul helped Timothy to grow and mature as a great spiritual leader who is approved by God and who would continue to carry the torch of mission in the Ephesian church. This very much resembles the prayer support and training of the first generation workers of our ministry towards us, the second and even the third generation .

(In today's world, many people are fascinated in finding out what good leadership is. There are so many books that are written on the subject of leadership. Even in churches, people desire to have stronger, smarter, wiser, and more effective leaders. They even attempt to take the principles and characteristics of worldly leadership and transition them over to church. But this will not work mainly because Jesus' leadership and the worldly leadership are different from their roots. As we learned through Mark's gospel, the basis of Jesus' leadership is sacrifice, obedience, and humility, which are completely different from the leadership of the world.)

When I was chosen by God's servants to share this message, I was both burdened and proud. I thought that I earned this opportunity because I thought that I was chosen because I was one of the recognized and qualified leaders of our ministry. So I was quick to put myself in Paul's perspective rather than Timothy's. However, after the meditation of this verse, God soon helped me to know that the chance to deliver this message was my opportunity to truly purify my heart, humble myself, and renew my compassion for one suffering soul. As verse 15 was Paul's sincere prayer for Timothy to grow as a mature servant of God, it was God's own heart through the prayer of Dr. Peter Chang, Dr. Paul Chung, M. John Park, and M. Peter Kim that I may grow as a humble, diligent, and Jesus and mission-centered worker of God. Let us pray together that you and I may make a decision of faith today to do our very best to present ourselves to God as ones approved by Him. Let us pray that we may be workers (not talkers) who are not ashamed and who can correctly handle the word of truth! Amen. This one verse message is in 3 parts.

First, a worker approved by God.

Let us read the first part of verse 15. **“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved.”** For a while now, Paul has been praying for Timothy and mentoring him to have confidence and faith in God. Here, Paul urged him to be one who is approved as a servant of God. Paul said in 1:9 “He has saved us and called us to live a holy life - not because of anything we have done, but because of his own purpose and grace.” Timothy, in his church in Ephesus, was undergoing his own struggle and hardship. Some people were criticising that he did not have a proper education background or degree. Some said that he was too young and too inexperienced and therefore not suited to lead the

church. But all these opinions did not matter because it was God himself who saved him and called him as His servant. It was by nothing but the grace of Jesus. This approval from God had been given to Timothy when he put his faith in the blood of Jesus and accepted him as his Lord and savior. Since God approved him, Timothy could stand tall and preach the message of repentance even to the elders and the false teachers overcoming his timidity.

Through yesterday's message of Jesus' cross, delivered by Samuel Chang, We once again could stand at the cross where Jesus suffered and died for us. Through Sacrificing his one and only Son as the ultimate sacrifice for all our transgressions, God has granted us the forgiveness and freedom from all our sins and called us to be shepherds for His flock, especially for the lost souls at Rutgers University. God has saved each one of us from the deep and dark pit of sin and death, not because of our actions or achievements, but out of His one-sided grace. He not only saved us but He also has chosen us to be his workers, Bible teachers, and disciples makers starting from right here in New Jersey, Bonn, Istanbul, and Moscow. God's approval gives us courage and faith that we can overcome all the oppositions such as fear, doubt, and timidity. We are workers, whom Jesus has freed, and whom God has chosen, for this campus ministry and disciple-making ministry, approved by God. In this fall, may we reach out to students with confidence, doing our best to present ourselves as God-pleasing people. Amen

"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved." What else can represent 'doing your best'? I thought about this for a while, trying to find something big I could do. In order for me to find the answer, I had to examine what I have lacked the most and what I have done the worst in recent years. And it came out to be what is spiritually the most fundamental, important, and basic practices. They are the gathering of daily bread and testimony writing. I sincerely repent that I have put my business, my pleasures, and sometimes even my family in place of seeking God and His will for me. For the longest time, I have been unfaithful to gather daily bread and write sincere testimonies while justifying myself with multiple reasons and excuses. I became extremely busy-minded to the point that I could not control myself that there was no peace of God in me. And I believe that it is God who has intervened and spoken to me through this time of preparation. I thank God for renewing my heart and reminding me that I am approved by God when I put my faith in the salvation of Jesus who saved me and freed me. Now, starting from this week, I want to be once again faithful in writing a Bible-centered testimony that is repentant, prayerful, and practical. I pray that I would not do it in seeking people's approval but God's, not as a tradition and ritual but as a sincere and earnest way to understand and practice God's word. I also want to revive my daily bread gathering and prayer in order that I will practically devote and depend my life to God. Amen

Paul said in Gal 1:10 "Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I was still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of God." No one can be a servant of God, trying to please people. It surely is an amazing privilege to be called a worker approved by God. "Do your best" does not mean you have to be perfect in doing everything you do like a superman. So we should not be discouraged or even jealous while comparing ourselves with others. It is about doing "Your best" for God while utilizing the talent and resources that He has given you. God gives 5 talents to someone. And He also gives 2 talents or 1 talent according to his will. There is no need for questioning God why because it is by God's sovereign will. What we should do is put whatever was given to us to work, and offer to God the fruit that we bear. Today, let us decide to do our best in presenting ourselves to God as workers approved by God. Amen!

Second, a worker who does not need to be ashamed.

Let us read the second and the middle part of verse 15. **"A worker who does not need to be ashamed."** What makes us ashamed? What makes us lose the confidence of Jesus' love and grace? It is our sin. We are ashamed when we sin against our God because sin brings the sense of guilt and

condemnation. When we sin against God, many times we respond by hiding and committing more sins, which leads to complete and eternal destruction. Our human effort and our will power cannot solve this problem of sin. The only person and the only way is through Christ that we can be unashamed. This is only by one-sided grace of Jesus Christ through his death and resurrection, which is the Gospel message. When we know who God is and what Jesus has done for us, we then can live in the confidence of the gospel.

Through the study of Mark's gospel for the last 6 days, we have learned that Jesus came to this world as the Messiah, as the Son of the living God. God sacrificed his one and only Son Jesus to die on the cross. In this way, God took all our sins away and saved us from eternal death. Not only that, God also called us to be the apostles. Mark 16:15-16 reads, "He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned." Knowing this and being sure of it, there is absolutely no reason for us to be ashamed of the gospel. God has given us the best news that changed our lives completely. Therefore, we should present ourselves to God as a worker who does not need to be ashamed.

It means we should present to God our best, whatever we do for the glory of God. When we even share one word of God with one person, we must do it with all our hearts, minds, and strength for this brings God the glory. As followers of Christ, as forgiven sinners caused by the blood of Jesus, it would be a shame if we bring an empty or half-hearted worship. It would be such a shame if we bring habitual praises; if we bring testimony without truth, repentance or decision of faith. Right? "A worker who does not need to be ashamed" means to bring the best to God in everything we do – Testimony, Messages, presentations, praise, prayer, and worship. Let us pray that we may bring the best to God; we may serve God with all our hearts, minds, and strength. Let us not be ashamed but be confident because of Jesus' work in us that changed us from hopeless sinners to forgiven sinners with God's hope and vision. Amen! Paul said in Romans 12:1 "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship." This is the heart attitude of the worker who does not need to be ashamed.

Third, a worker who correctly handles the word of truth.

Let us read the last part of verse 15. **"and who correctly handles the word of truth."** The word of truth is the Holy Bible, the word of God, from which the gospel of Jesus is highlighted. There are a lot of people who like to twist God's word in order to fit their own agenda. "Correctly handling" in Greek literally means to cut straight without making any change or modification. Paul urges Timothy to be an excellent bible teacher who correctly handles the word of truth. To protect God's flock from false teachers and from the evil forces of the world, we must be a Bible teacher who accurately understands the word of God and also presents the word of truth as the word of God. To do so, he needs to have the right attitude toward the word of God. 2 Timothy 3:16 says, "All Scriptures is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." As a Bible teacher, we must believe that the scripture is the word of God. All the Scripture contains God's breath, God's spirit, it is the word of life; it is absolute truth; it has authority to teach, rebuke, correct, and train in righteousness. Without such faith, no one is able to handle the word of truth.

When Jesus was hungry and thirsty in the wilderness, the devil tempted Jesus with words. But Jesus defeated the devil with the Scriptures as it was written in the Bible. He presented the scripture as the word of truth - the word of God. For a Samaritan woman who had been thirsty for truth and love, Jesus gave her the word of God which is the living water that quenches her thirsty soul. To the crowd who were like sheep without a shepherd, Jesus fed them with the word of God, the bread of life. He rebuked the Pharisees with the words of God. Jesus especially taught, rebuked, corrected and trained

the disciples with the words of God. Finally, Peter confessed “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.”(Jn 6:68-69) That is How Jesus handled the word of truth as the word of God.

This generation is full of relativism and humanism. More than ever before, we need Bible Teachers who correctly handle God’s word; We need Bible teachers who can teach the word of God as absolute truth; who can teach that only Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. When we handle God’s word correctly, we can put down all kinds of godless arguments and demolish the stronghold of Satan (2 Co 10:5). We give a special thanks to God for training and raising the 5 powerful messengers for GLEF 2021 including Joel Park, Maria Chang, Sam Hong, Peter Ryu, and Samuel Chang. Let me ask you: Wasn’t each and every one of their messages so powerful, challenging, and encouraging? We can only see the outcome but when we look carefully into how their process of preparation was in order to get to the point of their sharing, we can learn how they did their best and the hardest to correctly handle the word of truth. These heart-moving messages could not just happen at random but it was the fruit of their prayer, devotion, careful and fearful study and meditation of God’s words through Inductive Bible Study (IBS) as well as many days and nights spent in writing it, rewriting it, correcting it while going through multiple rehearsals and practices. These 5 powerful messengers give us a great example of workers who correctly handle the word of truth with their reverent attitude. Let us continue to remember and pray for these 5 messengers to continue to faithfully study and boldly preach the word of God when the GLEF is finished. Let us also pray that our Father God may give us the right heart and attitude to handle His words correctly so that when we read, study, and practice it, may His name be glorified.

As we conclude today’s message, let us read verse 15 with a prayerful and decisive heart. **“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”** Let us give thanks to God who saved us through Jesus Christ and who chose us as workers for Jesus’ world mission command to preach the gospel to the end of the earth starting from our own campuses. Let us give thanks to God who gives us the abundance of his words especially through GLEF 2021 that the Spirit of God in us is stored and renewed. I sincerely pray that you and I can make a decision of faith to do our best, presenting ourselves to God as ones approved by Him. Let us pray that we do not be ashamed of the gospel, but correctly handle the word of truth, so that our ministry can be the city on the hill where the lost souls come and become found in Jesus. Amen. Let us pray.