

# CHRISTIANS DILEMMA IN A PERILOUS TIME

*TEXT 2 Timothy 3:1-17*

*Presented by Bro Chris Afekolu (Bishop)*

## Introduction

### DILEMMA -

1. An argument presenting two or more equally **conclusive** alternatives against an opponent.
2. A usually **undesirable** or unpleasant choice – faces this dilemma; Raise interest rates and slow the economy or lower them and risk serious inflation.
3. A situation involving such a choice – here am I brought to a very pretty dilemma; I must offer money to the Lecturer or I fail my post UME admission.
4. A problem involving a difficult choice – the dilemma of following your spouse to denomination versus your believe in true body of Christ – the Church.
5. A difficult or persistent problem – unemployment.

### PERILOUS –

Full of or involving PERIL – a perilous journey; fraught with danger

### PERIL –

Exposure to the risk of being injured, destroyed, or lost

### {Definitions taken from Merriam Webster Dictionary}

Today we shall look at the challenges children of God faces each day in a complex world that lacks the fear of God. We are saddle with the choice or decision we must make without forsaking or compromise God's word. Most times the challenge places us at crossroad. Many are tempted to adapt to the situational ethics which most times are at variance with God's principle. Example in our Nation today, getting a job poses great challenge as prospective applicant may be compelled to do unwholesome practice in order to be offer an employment. It may be in the form of offering money or buying the job (bribe), offering one self, or your person is connected, which political party you belong, sadly even some worldly churches are using their church as a perquisite for employment. Merit and competitiveness had gone to winds!

Apostle Paul forewarns Timothy and by implication us too what the last days would be. The reasons thereof were clearly explained in **2 Timothy 3:1-9**. He also prescribes various remedies against the perilous times challenges. This is also described in **2 Timothy 3:10 -17**), particularly his own example (“But thou hast fully known my doctrine,” etc.) and the **knowledge of the holy scriptures, which are able to make us wise unto salvation, and will be the best antidote against the corruptions of the times we live in.**

In this chapter 3 Paul tells Timothy how bad others would be, and therefore how good he should be; the knowledge of badness of others in the last days will spur us to hold our own integrity even more firm. Purpose of our discussion is to know things that will manifest or are manifesting in the perilous time (Last Days) and how we are to resolve such challenges as they arise without putting our souls in jeopardy. Timothy or the Ministers of God must not think it strange if there were in the church bad men; for the net of the gospel was to enclose both good fish and bad,

**{Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. (Matthew 13:47-48 KJV)}**. Jesus Christ had foretold (**Matthew 24**) that there would come seducers, { And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. (**Matthew 24:4 KJV**) } Therefore we must not be surprised or offended when it rears its ugly head in the church.

Apostle Paul warns us clearing that in the last days **{2Ti 3:1}**, there would come perilous times. These would be difficult times, wherein it would be difficult for a man to keep a good conscience **{Ethics, Integrity or Morality}**. Perilous times shall come, for such as have the form of godliness (**{2Ti 3:5}**) shall be corrupt and wicked, and do a great deal of damage to the church. Perilous times shall come, for men shall be wicked. Our country is a great example of this wickedness. When one hears of the atrocities commitment daily in the country- you wonder where is the Man’s conscience; sealed and hardened for wickedness.

People could do anything for wealth, job, political positions even positions in the church. These are all signs of the last days. Sin makes the times perilous. There is a general corruption of manners, and of the tempers of men, this makes the times dangerous to live in; for it is hard to keep our integrity in the midst of general corruption. Current happening in this perilous time is an evidence of the truth of scripture-predictions; The Lord’s word cannot go back unfilled.

## **THE MARKS AND SIGNS OF THE PERILOUS TIME**

*For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, (2 Timothy 3:2 KJV)*

1. Self-love will make the times perilous. Men love their carnal selves better than their spiritual selves, hence could do anything to satisfy the fleshly desires. Men love to gratify their own lusts, and make provision for them, more than to please God and do their duty.

Instead of Christian love, which takes care for the good of others, they will be engrossed in themselves only, and prefer their own gratification before the church's edification. Perilous time is a period when men cannot control themselves and their own appetites. They have no rule over their own spirits, and therefore are like a city that is broken down, and has no walls; they are soon fired, upon the least provocation. All these abound in every facet of life in our country. The children of God are in the mix of these crops of people; we run our businesses, trades, contracts, etc. -

they make demands which are at variance with your faith. Demand gratifications which place the Children of God in a dilemma. Should I yield to them and sin against God or Obey God and lost the contract by disapproving their demand

2. Covetousness – Greed, Greediness, Materialism, longing, self-indulgence, Envy, etc these are the bane of ills in our society today. Self-love brings in a long train of sins and mischiefs. When men are lovers of themselves, no good can be expected from them, as all good may be expected from those who love God with all their hearts.

When covetousness generally prevails, when every man is for what he can get and for keeping what he has, this makes men dangerous to one another, and obliges every man to stand on his guard against his neighbour.

3. Pride and vain-glory. The times are perilous when mankind, being proud of themselves, are boasters and blasphemers, boasters before men whom they despise and look upon with scorn, and blasphemers of God and of his name. Their loots, accomplishment in life, positions and affluence are perceived as their intelligence, manoeuvring and smartness.

The times are perilous when mankind are generally deceitful, stubborn, and proud, ( **2Ti 3:4** ) When men are easily irritated and puffed up, behaving scornfully to all about them, and when this temper generally prevails, then the times are perilous. When men do not fear God they will not regard man, and could go to the extreme to show cast their pride. We live in a period where men are generally lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. God is to be loved above all. A carnal mind is full of enmity against God hence prefers anything before Him, especially such a sordid thing as carnal pleasure. We are caught in the web making decision in such situation.

4. The times are perilous when children are disobedient to their parents. They neglect their responsibilities which pertain to them both in duty and gratitude. A time when some children will be abusive to their own parents and rebel against them? No news that some communities in Nigeria are governed by the youths why the Elders are the errand boys.
5. The Bible says Unthankfulness and unholiness shall be the hallmark of perilous time. What is the reason that men are unholy and without the fear of God, if not the unthankful for the mercies of God? Be very careful for those who are unappreciative! Ingratitude and wickedness go together; for call a man ungrateful and you can call him by no worse name. **Unthankful and impure soul defiled with fleshly lusts, is an illustration of the great ingratitude to that God who has provided so well for the support of your body; we abuse His gifts, if we make them the food and fuel of our lusts – desires.**

6. The times are perilous when men will not be held by the bonds of either nature or common honesty, when they are without natural affection, and truce-breakers, **{Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, {false...: or, one who fomenters strife} (2 Timothy 3:3 KJV)}**. There is a natural affection due to all. Wherever there is the human nature, there should be humanity towards those of the same nature, but especially between relations. Times are perilous when children are disobedient to their parents and when parents are without natural affection to their children.

Corrupt nature of sin deprives men that nature which God has implanted in them for the support of their own kind; for the natural affection of parents to their children is that which contributes very much to the keeping up of mankind upon the earth. Those who will not be bound by natural affection will not be bound by the most solemn associations and covenants. The bible says they are truce-breakers. They have no regards of the human race and will not hesitate to harm his own species – human made in the image of the living God.

## HOW TO COPE WITH THE DILEMMA OF THE PERILOUS TIME

*But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, (2 Timothy 3:10 NKJV)*

*But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:14-17 NKJV)*

These scriptures are great antidote to managing the current evils in our society today. The guiding principle is to use the words of God to x-ray the choices we make when confronted with dilemma or at a crossroad. It will guide you from making a wrong decision that may displease God.

Apostle Paul directs us to keep close to a good education and particularly to what we had learned out of the Holy Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:14-15): Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned. Note, it is not enough to learn that which is good, but we must continue in it, and persevere in it unto the end.

Then are we Christ's disciples indeed, **{Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. (John 8:31 NKJV)}**. If Timothy would adhere to the truth as he had been taught, this would arm him against the snares and insinuations of the wicked ones; same is expected of us today.

**The major ethical question that most people face today is whether right and wrong are determined by a fixed standard or by a given situation.** If we believe much of what we see

around us today, we will conclude that what is ethical varies with the circumstances and anyone who believes in unchanging rules of behavior is as legalist {an advocate or adherent of moral legalism}.

**Bible believers, in contrast, believe that God's Word lays down moral laws and principles which are always binding.** Which view is right?

What kind of moral system is found in the Bible? First, its absolute standard of morality is God Himself. The Bible is the only standard because it is derived from God. Second, the Bible applies to all people of all times because every person is made in the image of God. Biblical morality, therefore, is not arbitrary. When we disobey God's moral law, we violate our own created nature. Third, the ultimate, final authority in the New Testament is Christ. We can accept or reject Christ, but we cannot accept only part of what Christ taught.

Fourth, the commandments in the Bible were given to us because God knows the end from the beginning. He knows what is best for us; He alone knows all the facts, sets all the goals, and determines all morality. Fifth, biblical morality involves intentions. It is more than external obedience to a moral code. We are judged by our intentions in a given action, rather than by the consequences of the action. This does not, however, prove that good intentions always make an act right. **To be truly "good," our deeds must be in harmony with God's will.**

Sixth, biblical morality is so superior that we need God's help to live that way. Compared to other systems, biblical morality is superior in three ways: It is self-consistent, it explains why some things are "wrong," and it corresponds to man's nature.

**Situation ethics is based on hypothetical situations and often requires choosing the lesser of two evils rather than doing something positively good. Situation ethics fails to deal seriously with the presence of evil. Evil is in the world; its effects are evident every day. However, ethics based on a particular situation can neither condemn evil nor explain its origin, for the perpetrators of evil can always excuse themselves because of their circumstances.**

## CONCLUSION

Those who would learn the things of God, and be assured of them, must know the Holy Scriptures, for they are the Divine revelation. Those who would get true learning must get it out of the Scriptures. The Bible is a sure guide to eternal life. The prophets and apostles did not speak from themselves, but delivered what they received of God, **2Pe 1:21. It is profitable for all purposes of the Christian life. It is of use to all, for all need to be taught, corrected, and reprov'd. There is something in the Scriptures suitable for every case.**

If only we may love our Bibles more, and keep closer to them, then shall we find benefit, and at last gain the happiness therein promised by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the main subject of Holy Bible. **We best oppose error by promoting a solid knowledge of the word of truth; and the greatest kindness we can do to children – new convert in the faith, is to make them early to know the Bible; to know the do's and don'ts rule as becometh a child of God.** This may help them greatly in managing dilemma of modern day.