

The background of the slide is an abstract, low-poly geometric pattern in various shades of blue, ranging from light sky blue to deep cerulean. The shapes are irregular polygons that create a textured, crystalline effect. The text is centered horizontally and vertically on the slide.

Title:
“Perilous Times and Precious Truths”

Scripture Reading: 2 Timothy 3:1-14

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

² For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

³ Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

⁴ Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

⁵ Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

6 For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,

7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

8 Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

9 But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as their's also was.

10 But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience,

11 Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.

12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

Paul dwelt on the evil of the times, and on the diffidence of Timothy.

Diffidence - the quality and in a state of being different

1. The culture of our days

7 contradictory cultures in our society that we are to not to conform to. What are they?

A. We are becoming more aggressive and more sensitive.

People throw insults more quickly than they are used to. Our reactivity to many social, political or even religious issues on the public platform are more blatant, blunt and merciless. We love to hurl insult at people especially on the social media but we ourselves are easily offended by the slightest criticism or opposition against us.

B. We are becoming more moralistic and yet less moral.

There is such a rise in the sense of social justice and human rights. There is such outrage towards social injustice, giving rise to platform like, 'me too movement', the 'black lives matter', child abuse, pedophile, sexual molestation in the work place, care for animals.

But on a personal level, we become less moral.

C. We are becoming more individualistic and more communal.

We champion social causes.

Yet they want to do it in a such that it celebrates their individualism.

D. We are becoming more spiritual and atheistic.

They go to church but their core values show that they are atheistic.

E. We are breaking from tradition and embracing heritage.

We are excited when a cultural landscape in our country is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site! Yet we are departing from the teaching of our parents, the Bible and the teachings of the church. We embrace THINGS of old but discard VALUES of old.

F. We are becoming more digital and analog.

Kids today seem to be tied umbilically to their phones. On the other hand, they also spend a lot of downtime painting clay pots, making scrapbooks, or repurposing old furniture, recycling waste and saving the environment.

G. We are becoming more empowered and more fatalistic.

One of the underpinnings of populist hashtag movements like #MeToo, #TimesUp and even #MAGA is the recognition that every person has agency. We're our own people, and we deserve to make decisions for ourselves, whether the prevailing powers like it or not.

The glorious truth is that we don't have to be bound by the spirit of our times; we don't have to be slaves to self and have our universe revolve around the contradictory culture. What are the precious truths we must adhere to in this perilous culture?

A. Appreciate the forward steps but don't fall for the trends.

B. Reaffirm our principles, but do not demand them of others.

As believers we need to know what we believe and why we believe. If we compromise our core values, we'll have nothing to offer a world that's as compromised as it's ever been.

C. Strive to learn, more than to win.

Winning is fun. Learning is hard.

Winning is short-term. Learning is long-term.

Winning builds barriers. Learning creates opportunities.

Winning makes enemies. Learning makes friends.

Winning creates losers. Learning gives us influence.

D. Respond with grace, not anger.

If you look under the surface of an angry person, you'll find a hurting person.

Grace is different. Grace heals. Grace will draw more people to repentance than anger ever will. If this church is to grow, the leadership must be people of grace.

E. Get to know your bible better.

F. Become more familiar with paradox.

G. Walk in integrity, humility and repentance.

2. The time of our Days

It will be perilous

The characteristics of Perilous times

Firstly, it will be perilous. The bible says, 'In the last days perilous times will come. The word translated 'perilous' has the idea of trouble, difficulty, and stressful situation.

The word '**perilous**' was used in classical Greek both of dangerous wild animals and the raging sea.

When Paul says Perilous times will come, Paul is not speaking of bad times, but bad people. John Calvin says, 'We should note what the hardness of danger of this time is in Paul's view to be, not war, not famine or diseases nor any of the other calamities of ills that befall the body, but the wicked and depraved ways of men.

Secondly it will happen in the last days. 'The last days' is a term especially appropriate to the season immediately before the return of Jesus and the consummation of all things.

Thirdly the human condition of our days. **2 Timothy 3:2-5** says, 'For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

A. Men will be lovers of themselves. Yet sadly this love of self is the foundation for all the depravity that follows in Paul's description. The adjective used is *philautos*, which means self-loving. Love of self is the basic sin, from which all others flow.

B. Men will be lovers of money.

C. Men will be boasters, proud, blasphemers. You are saying, 'I am the most important person. You don't matter and God does not matter. All that matter is me.'

D. Men will be disobedient to parents.

E. Men will be unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving. Unloving (translated *without natural affection* in the KJV) literally means, "without family love." Paul said that the end times would be marked by an attitude of growing disregard of normal family love and obligation.

F. Men will be slanderers.

G. Men will be without self-control. The story of no self-control can be written across almost everything today – sex, drugs, alcohol, food, work. Whatever we do, we often do it out of control.

H. Men will be brutal. Paul wrote by inspiration of the Holy Spirit that the *last days* would be marked by a particular brutality.

I. Men will be despisers of good.

I Men will be traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. National advertising slogans from the late 1990s:

- *Nothing is taboo.*
- *Break all the rules.*
- *To know no boundaries.*
- *Relax: No rules here.*
- *Peel off inhibitions. Find your own road.*
- *We are all hedonists and want to do what feels good. That's what makes us human.*
- *Living without boundaries.*
- *Just do it.*

J. Having a form of godliness but denying its power:

3. Precious truths

Firstly, Perilous times means discernment matters. It means to understand or know something through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Secondly faithfulness to God in difficulties and opposition.

Thirdly understand the course of evil men and the course of the godly. **Revelation 22:10-11 says**, 'Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near, Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right and the holy still be holy.'









