INTRODUCTION:
A. Lesson text: 2 Timothy 3:1-7 – “But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:

2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good,

4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,

5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

6 For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts,

7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

B. The 17th Century has been referred to as “The Age of Enlightenment.”

The 18th Century has been called “The Age of Reason.”

The 19th Century, “The Age of Progress.”

The 20th Century has been referred to as “The Age of Anxiety and Fear.”

1. Should ENLIGHTENMENT plus REASON plus PROGRESS equal ANXIETY and FEAR?

2. Others, and no doubt there are many, who refer to our age as a MESS. This would make our age “The Mess Age.”

3. The apostle Paul well described our age in II Timothy 3:1-7

   1. Reading that passage is much like reading the morning newspaper.

   2. George Bernard Shaw: “The Bible is more up-to-date than the morning newspaper.

C. In many ways our age is a Mess Age. Our generation is trying to:

   1. Drink its way to prosperity.

   2. Destroy its way to plenty.

   3. War its way to peace.

   4. Hate its way to love.

   5. Sin its way to God.

   6. Divide its way to unity.

   7. Divorce its way to marriage.

   8. Drift its way upstream.

D. Some conditions that now exist. (See supplementary sheet)

E. Fear, turmoil, chaos, uncertainty, desperation” aptly describe our age.

   The results have been aspirin, tranquilizers, barbiturates, amphetamines,
Addiction methadone, violence, and destruction.
1. Over 6 million sleeping tablets are consumed daily in the United States.
2. Over 7 billion sleeping pills are consumed each year.
3. It is estimated that there are some 7- billion headaches suffered by Americans annually. An average of some fifty per person.
4. Over 11 million pounds of aspirin are sold annually.

F. There are many messages being sounded out.
1. The fatalist says: “Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow you may die.”
2. The pessimist says: “What’s the use”, as he throws up his hands in dismay.
3. The atheist says: “No God, no hope beyond; so let your conscience guide you.
5. The strong say: Might makes right.”
6. The denominationalist says: “Attend the church of your choice and approach God in your own way, worship in your own way.”

G. What a mess! What a fine kettle of fish this is! And as Laurel and Hardy used to say, “Well, Ollie, this is a fine mess you have gotten us into this time.” What a mess! Oh, but what a message is needed, oh, what a message we have been given! The Gospel (“Good news”). My friends, the gospel message is the only one for this or any other age.
1. Men have submitted their messages. However, “There is a big difference between the books that men make and the Book that makes men.
2. Paul, in speaking before King Agrippa, told of the power in the message Jesus of Nazareth had commissioned him to take to the Gentiles. Acts 26:18 – “Then Agrippa said to Paul, ‘You almost persuade me to become a Christian.’”
3. 2Timothy 4:1-2 – “I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:
   2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.
   3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;
   4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”
4. Romans 1:16 –“ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”
5. Here is the assertion, but where is the proof that God’s message is the answer to this mess age. Perhaps the proof of the pudding is in the eating.
GOD’S MESSAGE FOR THIS MESS AGE

A. MESSAGE OF LOVE . . . FOR AN AGE OF HATE

1. I do not believe that I need to offer detailed proof to establish the fact that hate exists today in our world, in our age.
   a. How many songs, novels, poems, television programs, etc. have as a basis some aspect of love or the need for love?
   b. How many feel that no one loves them?
   c. How many have been told by a significant other, “I don’t love you anymore”?

2. The Gospel is a message of love from beginning to end.
   a. The word “love” is found at least 459 times in the Bible. That number does not include other usages such as “lovely” or “loving”, etc.
   b. Romans 5:8 – “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
   c. 1 John 4:10 – “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

3. It is founded upon Christ’s love in giving His life and His blood.
   a. John 15:13 – “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.”
   b. Galatians 2:20 – “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

4. God’s message is a message of love. God’s message encourages all men to love others.
   a. That message encourages us to love brethren.
      1. 1 Thessalonians 4:9 – “But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another.”
      3. We sometimes leave the “r” out of “brother”, and “brother” then becomes “bother.” Is brother too much bother?
   b. That message encourages us to love our families.
      1. Ephesians 5:25 – “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.”
      2. Titus 2:4 – “That they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children.”
   c. That message encourages us to love our enemies. Matthew 5:44 – “But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.”
1. There is too much “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth” being practiced in our age.
2. Sometimes these people may be hard to love. Nonetheless, this is a command from our Lord.
   d. That message encourages us to love. Matthew 22:39 – “And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”
This command is second only to that of loving God. This love is the solution to many
4. In an age filled with so much hate, isn’t it comforting to know that God, Christ, and Christians love you . . . are concerned about you . . . and desire to see saved eternally? Let us deliver this “Wonderful Story of Love” to the ends of the earth.

A MESSAGE OF PEACE...FOR AN AGE OF WAR

A. There are wars and rumors of wars. When Jesus spoke of “wars and rumors of wars” in Matthew 24:6, He was speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem. However, this principle does apply today.
   1. According to the Associated Press, the world spends 1.3 million dollars every minute for military purposes.
   2. The cost of a new nuclear submarine equals the educational budget of 23 developing countries with 160 million school-age children.
   3. According to the Canadian Army Journal, a former president of the Norwegian Academy of sciences, aided by historians from England, Egypt, Germany, and India came up with some fantastic figures and findings.
      a. Since 3600 B.C. the world has known only 292 years of peace.
      b. During this period there have been 14,531 wars, large and small,
      c. 3 billion, 640 million people have been killed.
      d. The value of the destruction would pay for a golden belt that would reach around the world, a belt that would be 97.2 miles wide and 33 feet thick.
      e. Since 650 B.C. there have been 1,656 arms races, of which only 16 did not end in war. 1,650 resulted in war.
      f. On the basis of the computation in the Moscow Gazette, Gustave Valbert in his day could report that “from the year 1496 BC to AD 1861 (years ago) there were in 3,358 years, 227 years of peace and 3,130 years of war. There were 13 years of war to every year of peace.
      g. It hasn’t been long since one American man out of every eight was a war veteran.

B. There are wars and rumors of wars...but, why must there be wars? James
provides the answer. *James 4:1-2* - “Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?

2 You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.

1. When I look at the know casualty list of the American dead from

   The Revolutionary War 25,324  
   The Civil War 498,332  
   World War I 116,710  
   World War II 407,316  
   The Korean War 54,546  
   The Vietnam War 58,098

I am reminded how weary our old world must be of war and warmongers.

2. The existence of the United Nations, problems and all, is evidence that our world is war-weary.

C. Can there be peace? If so, what is the solution for peace? Is not the Gospel the answer! The Bible mentions war some 250 times and peace some 397 times. The Gospel provides peace.

1. To begin with, the Gospel produces peace between God and man.

   1. *Romans 1:7* – “. . . Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

   2. That peace is made possible through Christ. *Romans 5:1* – “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

b. Our hope continues as long as we continue in the gospel. *Colossians 1:23* – “If indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.”

c. *1 Peter 1:3-5* – “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

d. *John 14:1-3* – “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.

   In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

   And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”
A MESSAGE OF FAITH . . . FOR AN AGE OF DOUBT

A. We are living in an age where there are doubts about many things. There are those who doubt the very existence of God, the virgin birth of Jesus, the authenticity of the Bible, the existence of a literal Heaven and hell, etc.

B. Our footsteps falter unless the aims we have in this life are based upon faith. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:7 — “For we walk by faith, not by sight.”

C. Our Gospel is a gospel of faith. It offers faith. I find faith mentioned some 247 times in the Bible.

D. The great Bible examples of faith, as recorded in Hebrews 11, show that man can succeed when he acts by faith.
   1. Faith is mentioned 24 times in Hebrews 11. Of that number, 15 times the expression, “By faith” is used. “By faith Abel offered . . . By faith Enoch was translated . . .”, etc.
   2. Faith is a paramount part of the Gospel.

C. To bring faith to the world we must proclaim Christ to the world. Let us present Christ to the world as:
   - Redeemer
   - King
   - Lord
   - Savior
   - Mediator
   - Judge

D. The Gospel does not offer a “faith only” doctrine, but rather it offers a faith that obeys. Each example of conversion in Acts is a faith that obeyed the Gospel.
   1. Repentance is faith willing.
   2. Confession is faith speaking.
   3. Baptism is faith submitting.
   4. Prayer is faith communing.
   5. Christian living is faith serving.

E. The gospel is indeed a message of faith.

CONCLUSION:

A. We examined God’s Message for this Mess Age
   1. God offers a message of LOVE for an age of HATE.
   2. God offers a message of PEACE for an age of WAR.
   3. God offers a message of HOPE for an age of DESPAIR.
   4. God offers a message of FAITH for an age of DESPAIR.
B. Love . . . Peace . . . Hope . . . And faith . . . What great building blocks for an enduring life. Three of the four are mentioned in the great love chapter of the Bible, 1 Corinthians 13. “And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” 1 Corinthians 13:13 
C. If our world would heed these messages of love, peace, hope, and faith, we would witness a revival in our society the like of which has never been experienced before. 
D. Let’s remove this MESS in this AGE, and let’s do it with the Gospel of Christ. 
E. Begin with yourself . . . TODAY! A better world begins with you. 
F. **God’s Plan for Man’s Salvation**
a faith that obeys. Each example of conversion in Acts is a faith that obeyed the Gospel.

a. Repentence is faith willing.
b. Confession is faith speaking