

## 2 Timothy

### I. Introduction

- A. **2 Timothy 4:1-8** . . . I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: [2] preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. [3] For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, [4] and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. [5] But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. [6] For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. [7] I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; [8] in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.
- B. **Vs 1-2** are directed at pastors, elders, and teachers in the church. **Vs 3-4** are a warning to all of us about the all-too-common downward spiral of Christians and godly Churches – over time. **Vs 5** returns to dealing with the pastors, elders, and teachers in the church. **Vs 6-8** give us a picture of the confident hope godly Christians have for life after death.
- C. Prayer

### II. Charge to church leaders; Warning to Christians; Confident expectations

- A. [1] I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: [2] preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.
- In **vs 1**, Paul provides four motivating reasons for Timothy to do what he is telling Timothy to do in **vs 2**.
    - First motivating reason:** Paul says that God and Christ Jesus support his solemn charge to Timothy. He makes this claim by stating that he is saying these things to Timothy in the presence of God and Christ Jesus. The truth here for all of us is that in serving God and the church, we are serving God and our Lord Jesus Christ, first and foremost, and then God's people.

- b. **Second motivating reason:** Paul uses the coming judgment of the living and the dead as a motivating reason for Timothy to do his part well. There are two lessons here for us to consider.
- (1) **First Lesson:** a day of judgement, or reckoning is coming, and no one is exempt. The scriptures put it this way:
    - (a) **2 Corinthians 5:10**, “For we must **all** appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body (*in this life*), according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”
    - (b) **Romans 14:10b,12**, “For we will **all** stand before the judgment seat of God...[12] So then **each one** of us will give an account of himself to God.”
    - (c) Since we will be judged in this way, it is exceedingly wise to make a sincere effort to live and serve according to the will and word of God.
  - (2) **Second Lesson:** When serving God and the church, our part is to do our part well. God’s part is to enable us, equip us, and empower us for the work, **and** take care of the results that come from our part.
    - (a) This truth is clearly confirmed in **1 Corinthians 3:6-7**, “I (*Paul*) planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. [7] So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth.
    - (b) When church leaders manipulate the gospel or their followers to get results that gratify their earthly views of success, they are taking matters into their own hands and using the gospel and the church for personal gain rather than relying on God for an outcome that is for His gain and the spiritual health of the church.
    - (c) May we want to our part well in building God’s kingdom.
- c. **Third motivating reason:** Paul reminds Timothy that Jesus will return – which means there is a limit to the amount of time available to teach the word of God, to speak the truths of God to those around us, and for those who hear to respond in faith and change their ways accordingly. Therefore, the limitation of time ought to motivate us to be diligent in doing our part.
- (1) However, some will say, the return of Christ has been prophesied for several thousand years. It hasn’t happened yet, so why take it a motivating factor? (**2 Peter 3:3-9**)

- (2) Consider, it isn't just Christ's return that limits the time available to speak God's truths to those around us, our own lifetime, along with all the necessary duties of life, also sets limits on our time.
        - (3) Therefore, we are being exhorted to make the most of our time for God's sake and the sake of those who need God's salvation from eternal damnation and the self-inflicted wounds of selfish and sinful living.
      - d. **Fourth motivating reason:** Finally, Paul tells Timothy that all this work is for Christ's kingdom – the only kingdom that can save us from ourselves, save us from the penalty of sin, and that lasts forever.
    2. What motivates you to speak God's truths to those around you?
  - B. In vs 2, Paul tells Timothy what and how he is to do this work:  
[2] preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.
    1. **Paraphrase vs 2:** Openly and publicly teach and speak about the word of God, and especially the parts about God's worthiness to be trusted, eternal salvation, and godly, sensible living. Be prepared so that you can do this anytime, anywhere, and with anyone. Reprove, rebuke, and exhort whomever will listen – showing them the error of their ways and how to live a godly life in the midst of a sinful world. However, do this with great patience – knowing how you once loved the ways of selfishness and sin, resisted the truth of God and His word, and believed no good could come from repenting and living a God-pleasing life. Therefore, respectfully, gently, and prayerfully state and restate truth in the hope that it will be understood and applied.
    2. Though this verse is directed at pastors, teachers, and church leaders, it attaches a vital principle to a needful action that we all ought to observe.
      - a. The vital principle is: **Be prepared.** In other words, don't go into your day unprepared to carry out the needful action.
      - b. The needful action is: **Speak** about God and His word to anyone, anywhere, anytime. You won't do this well without preparation.
    3. For me, this kind of caring about others begins with a conversation where I focus on listening, or I ask a question and carefully listen to the answer so that I gain a clearer picture of what and how to talk to them about God and His word.

- a. If it becomes clear the person does not want to talk about such things, I back off.
  - b. If the one who doesn't want to talk about such things is a family member, friend, acquaintance, church member, or someone else I encounter on a recurring basis, I look for times when it seems reasonable to try again – without becoming pushy or obnoxious.
- C. Remember what was just said about the limitations on time? **Vs 3-4** states that with the passage of time, there will be a decreasing number of people interested in or willing to hear the truth of God. [**vs 3**] For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, [4] and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.
1. We see this sickness in the church today.
    - a. There are pastors, teachers, and leaders who use the church system and the people to gratify their own selfish desires.
    - b. But it is also true that some church attendees are hiring pastors and teachers, and voting for leaders who will turn the church system and the teachings in a direction that gratifies their selfish desires.
    - c. In other words, you are as responsible for having godly leaders as the leaders are responsible to be godly.
  2. The sad reality of **vs 3-4** is that fleshly Christians are able to find fleshly pastors, teaches, and leaders to give them the kind of watered-down Christianity they want. But the other side of this is just as sad – fleshly pastors, teaches, and leaders are able to find crowds of fleshly Christians to follow them.
  3. The point here is that there is and will continue to be a decreasing number of people who will listen to what you have to say about God, His word, and how it applies to them – and that means there is no better time than now for this needful activity.
  4. It is for these two reasons – limited time and a decreasing number of people who will listen – that we ought to make the most of the time we have to speak God's truths to those around us.
- D. [**5**] (*Therefore, we need to*) be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill [our] ministry.
1. In this context, to **be sober in all things** is to think, speak, and act sensibly and godly – in order to (1) set an example of godliness;

- (2) give credibility to what you say about God and His word; and
  - (3) remain faithful yourself to God and His word.
    - a. The idea here is to be sober in contrast to being carefree or careless – because how you live your Christian life significantly matters for your own well-being, and for the spiritual health of the church and other Christians.
    - b. In other words, sober, sensible, thoughtful, careful, committed Christian living is essential for growing spiritually, progressing in Christian maturity, promoting and protecting the spiritual health of the church, and for seeking the good of others for their sake and God’s sake.
  - 2. **Endure hardship** – that is, be willing to pay the price for choosing to be godly in a world that is increasingly ungodly, and a church that is progressively moving away from committed godliness to a self-serving, tolerant of sin, worldly form of the Christian religion.
  - 3. **Do the work of an evangelist** – Call, invite, urge unbelievers – whether inside or outside the church – to repent, trust God, and live a godly life.
  - 4. **Fulfill your ministry** – That is, stay with it until you have finished what you have been called to do, or have agreed to do, or until you cannot do it any longer.
    - a. Obviously, this is for those who have a specific calling from God or who have accepted a position of responsibility in the church.
    - b. Yet it can also be true of the rest of us, for we are all servants of God and called to let our light shine in this dark world, and in a darkening church, in such a way that those around us will see our good works, recognize them as being of and from God, and so see God’s goodness and His worthiness of trust and obedience.
- E. **Vs 6-8** provide a glimpse into the mindset and perspective of one who has preached the word, who has been ready in season and out of season, who has reproved, rebuked, and exhorted with great patience and instruction, who has been intentionally sober in all things, who has endured numerous hardships and persecution, who has done the work of an evangelist, and who has fulfilled his ministry.
- 1. [6] For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. [7] I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; [8] in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord,

- the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.
2. This is not a proclamation by Paul that he deserves justification and the accompanying rewards. Rather, it is a realistic confidence that he has attained a level of Christ-likeness and served God well enough to be rewarded in addition to God's gift of eternal life.
  3. The idea of rewards for godly living and Christian service is spoken of in a number of other scriptures. For example:
    - a. **James 1:12**, "Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him."
    - b. **1 Peter 5:4** [4] (*Talking about elders who serve well*) And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.
    - c. **Revelation 2:10**, "Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."
  4. There is an appropriate, biblically based confidence in God's gift of eternal life and God's rewards for service. But there is also a self-deceived confidence among those who call themselves Christians. In fact, Jesus said in **Matthew 7:21-23**, that many will have a self-deceived confidence – only to find out their confidence was misplaced.
  5. However, the history of Paul's life affirms that he was rightfully confident.
    - a. What does the history of my life say about me? Or better yet, what will the history of my life say about me when I stand before my Lord at the final judgment?
    - b. What about you?

### III. Conclusion

- A. In light of the difficult times ahead, may we make it our aim to live and serve in such a way as to be able to say at the end of our life, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith"