

Paul's Epistles to Individuals

Lesson 22 – 2 Timothy 4:1-5

I. Paul's Charge to Timothy (vs. 1-5)

Paul's love for Timothy and the church causes him great emotion in these final thoughts of this letter. This is the last known letter written by Paul, near the end of his life (**2 Tim. 4:6-8**) as he was imprisoned in Rome (**2 Tim. 1:8**). These last few words of this letter show concern for the future of Timothy and the church. Again Paul "charges" Timothy. This is the fourth time Paul uses this word in his teaching and admonition to Timothy. Two other times it is directed to Timothy (**1 Tim. 5:21; 1 Tim. 6:13**) and once directing Timothy to "charge" others in a similar manner (**2 Tim. 2:14**). Here as in the other cases, the idea of "charge" (Gr. "diamarturomai") is to "*testify thoroughly as a solemn witness*". This is a charge given with the authority of inspiration and Timothy could be confident in its meaning. The charge was to faithfully preach the word, knowing its value (**2 Tim. 3:16-17**).

II. Given Before God and Christ Who Will Judge (v. 1)

This charge is given "*in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus*". Some commentators suggest that the Greek here is constructed in a way to suggest that "God" and "Christ Jesus" are not separate but are the same person. Either way, the phrase further indicates the seriousness of the charge. The word "God" certainly applied to Christ in other scriptures (**Acts 20:28; Heb. 1:8**), testifying with others of the deity of Christ (**Col. 2:9**). Establishing that Jesus will judge all upon his appearing also shows the importance of the accuracy of the teaching to be done. The judgment of Jesus will be apparent to all when he comes and this should be an encouragement to those who serve Him (**1 Thes. 4:15-18**). The Kingdom was in place at the time of this writing (**Col. 1:13; Heb. 12:28-29; Rev. 1:9**).

III. Preach the Word (v. 2)

The word "preach" (Gr. "kerusso") means to be a herald or to proclaim boldly. It demands the full presentation of God's Word without addition, substitution or omission (**Acts 20:27; 2 John 9; Deut. 4:2; Rev. 22:18-19**). The requirement is to preach this word regardless of circumstances, in season or out. To be instantly ready, always prepared, making wise use of time (**Eph. 5:15-16**) to accomplish the assigned task.

IV. Reprove, Rebuke and Exhort (v. 2)

It is for these purposes that the Word is provided (2 Tim. 3:16). The Word convicts people of the sin that separates them from God. Reprove and rebuke are corrective actions. They indicate a need for change and a requirement to stop doing what is wrong. Exhortation is an encouragement to do what is right. The Word does both, with severity and gentleness. The preacher is to activate it for that purpose, with patience and teaching. Sound and reasonable presentation of the truth both Jesus and Paul is right. (**Matt. 20:20-28; Matt. 12:34-37; 1 Cor. 5:9-11; Acts 17:22ff**). This is according to the kindness and severity of God (**Rom. 11:22**).

V. For the Time Will Come...(v. 3-4)

By Inspiration, Paul has repeatedly warned that times would be that people would not want to hear the truth and even actively refute it with false doctrines (**1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1**). This was true then and it is true now. The "sound" (healthy or wholesome) doctrine is contrasted with the unhealthy, toxic false doctrines that exist. But those affected by these false teaching are influenced by their own negligence (**1 Tim. 6:3-5; 1 Tim. 1:9-11; Gal. 1:6-10; Gal. 3:1-3**). These will yield to their own lusts so diligence is required to preserve the purity of the teaching (**2 Tim. 1:13; Tit. 1:9, 2:1**). They will not only be deceived

and drawn away but at some point even prefer false teachings to the degree that will seek out teachers who will tickle their ears rather than inform them of truth. As Paul experienced when teaching in Iconium, Lystra, Derbe (**Acts 14**) and other locations, people will be angered by the teaching of truth and aggressively resist it. The word “myth” (“fables” in the KJV) means simply a fiction. These are lies not rooted in any fact. This is nothing new to Paul as he had many times taught against the influences of false teaching in Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus and many others. In **Jeremiah 5:30-31**, the prophet says, “*An appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land: The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule on their own authority; and My people love it so!*”.

VI. The Defense Defined (v. 5)

Paul defines for Timothy what he is to do as a defense. This is in contrast to what others may do, as illustrated in the words, “But you...”. Timothy is to do confidently engage in the following:

A. *Be Sober in All Things*

The word translated “sober” in the NASB is translated “watch” in the KJV. The Greek word is “nepho” means “*to be in a sober mood, to be calm and collected in spirit, to be temperate, dispassionate, circumspect, alert*”. Every elder, preacher and Christian should be attentive to evil or its appearance (**Eph. 5:14-18**). Failure to do so will result in being corrupted by Satan’s schemes (**2 Cor. 2:9-11**).

B. *Endure Afflictions*

Paul was well acquainted with affliction but he knew it was more than worth it for the cause of Christ (**2 Cor. 4:16-17, 11:23ff**). Christ Himself was a “Man of sorrows” (**Isa. 53:3**) and all those who follow Him must be prepared to endure hardship.

C. *Do the Work of an Evangelist*

The word “evangelist” is a transliteration of the Greek which means “one who brings good news”. The “good news” is about the Kingdom of Christ (**Acts 8:12, 13:32**), the Gospel. It is for everyone (**Rom. 1:14**). It differs from the work of an elder or a deacon and as Paul was, those who preach should be eager to do so (**Rom. 1:15**).

D. *Fulfill Your Ministry*

In the KJV, the phrase is “*make full proof of thy ministry*”. The Greek word for “make full proof” is “plerophoreo”, which means “*to cause a thing to be shown in full, to carry through to the end, to fully perform*”. Paul was therefore not only encouraging Timothy to do the work of an evangelist but to fulfill the role with enthusiasm, not slothfully but fervent in spirit (**Rom. 12:11-12; Eccl 9:10-11** – “*Whatever your hand finds to do, verily, do it with all your might; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going*”). A “ministry” is a work of service. The Greek word is “diakonian”, which is from the same word that is translated “serve” in **Acts 6:1**. The life of Christian is to be characterized by a “spiritual service of worship” (**Rom. 12:1**).