

Preach The Word

2 Timothy 4:1-5

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In 2 Timothy 4, we have come to the last words of the great Paul the Apostle. Some have called this section or even the entire epistle Paul's swan song. The last words of great people are significant. They're like windows that help us to see into the very soul of the person speaking. Many times when I'm reading this passage and thinking about it, I'm thinking, What would I say if I knew I only had days to live? Because that's really where Paul is at. Paul had a certainty that he was going to be executed. It could be days, weeks, a couple of months, but it would be a very short period of time.

Paul is in prison in Rome. He's not under house arrest anymore receiving friends and so forth, but he's in a dungeon. It's called the Mamertine dungeon. It was basically a hole in the ground like a cistern. They would drop the prisoner in and there was no way to get out. They would actually drop food down to them. It was just a deep, dark hole or dungeon. He's pouring out his last words to his young protege, Timothy, in the faith. Paul says in verse 7 (we'll get there in just a moment), "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith," those famous words of Paul, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith," the race that God set before him, the faith that God had entrusted to him, and the fight that he was in in the spiritual warfare of the ministry that God had called him to. Paul is now being (verse 6) poured out (we'll look at that in just a moment again) as a drink offering. Paul is writing to Timothy with a full understanding that he is going to die, and he's passing the torch to his young protege.

The longer I'm in the ministry, the more I think about the next generation and will they be faithful to God's Word. Will they be faithful to the gospel? Will they be faithful to preach God's Word and to live a godly life and impact their culture and their generation? I think basically we all have a responsibility to serve our own generation, but if we can have a lasting impact by committing to faithful men those who will teach others, that's a passion that I have as well.

The first section of this chapter is verses 1-2, and I would give it the title: The Charge. Look at it with me (verses 1-2). Paul says, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ," uses His whole title, Lord Jesus Christ, "who shall judge the quick and the dead," I'm reading from a King James translation, so it uses the old English "quick" for alive. In the Old English, if you were dead, you weren't very quick; if you were quick or alive, then you were living, so He'll judge the living "and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom," this would be His Second Coming. Here's the charge (verse 2), "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." I don't know if you have a life verse, but I've actually adopted this passage as my life verse. This has been kind of like the guiding light, the direction, the guide, and the motivation for many years of ministry that God has called me to, to do just what Paul tells Timothy to do, charges him to do this one thing, to "Preach the word."

The charge is a solemn charge. I want you to notice it, “I charge thee therefore.” The word “charge” there is actually a word of I adjure thee. It was used to call someone into a courtroom and to testify under oath. I don’t know if you’ve ever had the experience of being called into a courtroom, being put on the witness stand, and saying, “Do you solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth so help you God?” And you say, “I will,” or “I do,” and you swear on a Bible. It’s a very, very solemn kind of a situation. Well, that’s the picture, the imagery. When Paul uses the word “charge,” he’s calling Timothy into a courtroom, and he’s saying, “I adjure thee,” “I command thee,” “I charge thee.” He’s to testify under oath in a court of law. Paul is giving Timothy a solemn mandate that he must obey.

In the Greek, this is what is called, again, an imperative or a command. It’s imperative or it’s a command. It’s not an option. “Timothy, you are to preach the Word.” Paul realizes that he’s going to pass off the scene and Timothy is going to take his place in ministry, and what’s the one thing he wants Timothy to do? He wants him to preach the Word. I am completely, absolutely, totally convinced biblically, and I think that I see it in experience, that the greatest need in the church today is for pastors to do just what Paul told Timothy to do, that is, to preach the word.

Today, pastors are doing everything but preaching the Word. They are involved in politics, which is okay, but that’s not what the Bible calls us to do or a pastor to be. They are involved in psychological counseling and other social activities, but the Bible calls the pastor to preach the Word. When Paul met with the elders at Ephesus in Acts 20, he said, “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall man arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them,” so he says I want you to preach the Word and feed the flock of God which is among you taking the oversight.

When Peter wrote to the pastors or the elders in the church he said, “You are to shepherd,” the word “shepherd” actually means to feed. The word “pastor” is the Latin form of the word shepherd. That’s what the word “pastor” means, shepherd, and the word actually means to feed—not only to lead, not only to protect, but it has the primary meaning of feeding. I believe the number one primary job of a pastor is to feed the sheep, and my goal as the pastor of this church is that you are fed the Word of God—that when you come to this church, the Bible will be opened, it will be read, it will be explained, and it will be applied to our lives. You come here not to be entertained, not to hear some message that is basically something other than Scripture, but you come to hear a word from God. That’s my commitment. I believe the same mandate applies to all pastors and even to us as Christians, that when you witness and when you counsel and when you share with individuals, don’t give them your philosophy, psychology, or social justice, give them the good news of Jesus Christ, nothing more, nothing less. Share the Word of God. That’s the pastor’s number one priority.

Paul calls on two witnesses in this courtroom. I want you to notice them in verse 1. He says, “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom,” so here are the two witnesses. They are God the

Father, that's pretty solemn, and God the Son—God the Father and God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He says that Jesus is going to come and He will "...judge the quick," the alive, "and the dead at his appearing," Jesus is going to judge all mankind. He'll judge believers for their works. He'll judge unbelievers for their sin. He will sit on a Great White Throne and judge the unbelievers. He will sit on what's called the Bema Seat (we're going to see at the end of our section tonight), and He'll reward Christians for their faithful service. You need to realize that we're all going to stand before the Lord, and we're going to have to give an account of our ministry and how we lived our Christian lives. Paul is giving Timothy this solemn charge and the witness of God the Father, "and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead."

The statement of the charge is in the second verse. I've already alluded to it, but it's in verse 2. It is very simple. "Preach the word," now what he does in verse 2 is tells him what to do, "Preach the word," and then he tells him how to do it, "be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." Beginning in verse 3, Paul tells Timothy why to do it. He's telling every pastor, and I actually believe that it's time for the people who go to church to know what the pastor's job is. We're going to see that in a moment when in the last days people have itching ears and turn their ears away from the truth and are given unto fables. The pew should be demanding of the pulpit that the Bible is preached. I think more pastors would preach the Word if the people actually said, "That's what we want. If you don't preach the Word, I'm going to go somewhere else and find a place where they do preach the Word." Too many Christians go to churches where they don't preach the Word when they need to go to the churches that do preach the Word, but the Bible predicts that in the last days people aren't going to want the Word of God. They're going to want their ear tickled or their fancy tickled.

The statement, and again, Paul gives five imperatives or commands, all in what is called the aorist tense. The first is, "Preach the word," commandment number one. Now, the word "preach" there is the Greek word *kerysso*. We get our word to herald from it. That doesn't mean the preacher's name is Harold, it means that he is a herald. In the ancient world, if a king wanted to seminate a message, he couldn't tweet, he couldn't do Instagram, he couldn't go on Facebook, he couldn't go on tv, he couldn't write a letter, he couldn't call on the phone, he had to have a herald. A herald would have the king's message on a scroll. He would walk through the streets of the town, get up on a high podium, and say, "Hear ye, hear ye! Thus saith the king." Then, he would proclaim—he would announce—the king's message.

There is so much going through my brain. One of the problems I have with this passage tonight is I've preached it so many times and I love it so much that it's hard for me to even get through the text. Let me say this. When a herald would have the king's message to proclaim, he couldn't change it. He couldn't say, "Man, this king doesn't know what he's talking about. The king has a message, but I'm going to put it aside. Let me tell you what I think you need to know." He'd be in big trouble. It'd be off with his head. He couldn't add to it, he couldn't take away from it, he couldn't change it, he couldn't dilute it, he couldn't twist it, he couldn't work it around. He would actually, from beginning to end, tell the people what the message of the king

was. He was a herald. That's conveyed in the idea of this word *kerysso*. It has the idea of to herald with formality, gravity, and authority. When a herald was proclaiming a king's message, he was speaking for the king with all the authority of the king.

When a preacher or a pastor or a teacher or a Christian is sharing—proclaiming—God's Word, you are a herald. You are speaking with all the authority of God Himself. That's why you should quote Scripture when you're sharing with people. You should share the Word of God because it's like the two-edged sword, right? "...sharper than any two-edged sword," and it cuts to the heart of individuals. The herald was speaking with authority and formality and gravity. He wasn't just discussing and talking about things. He had a message. He preached it. He proclaimed it. If you didn't like what the herald said, take it up with the king. If you didn't like the message the herald brought, talk to the king about it, "I'm just a delivery boy." That's what a preacher is supposed to be, by the way. He's not supposed to invent or create his message but just preach His message.

What is Timothy to preach? Notice it in verse 2, "...the word," not about the Word, not from the Word, "...the word." What is the word? Back up to 2 Timothy 3:14-17. We looked at it last week. Paul says, "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; 15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures," I believe that the "word" in 2 Timothy 4:2 is the same as the "holy scriptures" in 2 Timothy 3:15. So, you are to "...continue thou in the things which thou hast learned...And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works," and without skipping a beat, there's no gap between chapters 3 and 4, "I charge thee therefore." Now, because you are to follow Paul's example, Timothy, because you're to stand on the Scriptures, which bring salvation, which are given by inspiration and are sufficient for life and godliness, then I want you to preach, or *kerysso*, to herald, God's Word.

The "therefore" of 2 Timothy 4:1 takes you back into the end of chapter 3 where Paul had exhorted Timothy to continue in the Scriptures, "...which are able to make thee wise unto salvation...given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for," what is right, what is wrong, how to get right, and how to stay right. The fact that the Bible is given to stay right with God indicates that we never outgrow it, we never get beyond it. It's a lifelong process of continuing in God's Word. I had a Christian friend years ago when we were young Christians. He read the Bible, and then he stopped. I said, "Why did you stop reading the Bible?" He said, "Because I finished it, the last chapter, the last verse. Okay! I've done that, done deal, I finished it." I said, "Well, start over again, Buckaroo." "You want me to read it again?" "Yeah. I want you to read it again, and keep reading it over and over and over and over again. Meditate day and night in God's Word." You don't just read the Bible once, "I've read that. Oh, I've read that. Oh, I read that." You continue to read God's Word. Every time you read God's Word you discover new things, don't you? It's kind of exhaustiveless. It's as infinite as God Himself. God has placed His Word above His own very name.

Let me give you the synonyms here. “Preach the word,” and then notice in verse 3, “sound doctrine,” “the truth” (verse 4), “the faith” (verse 7). These are all a reference to “the word.” You’re to preach sound doctrine. You’re to preach the truth. You’re to “Preach the word.” Know what Timothy is not to preach. He doesn’t say preach philosophy. He doesn’t say preach psychology. He doesn’t say preach your own ideas or your own concepts or what you want to say. He said, “Preach the word,” nothing more, nothing less.

I believe that what Paul is telling Timothy and telling pastors to do today is preach what are called expository sermons or teaching expositionally (sorry for that big word). Expository expositional preaching is this: Preaching the meaning of the text in its historical, grammatical, and theological context. Every verse of Scripture has one meaning, not multiple meanings. You can’t make a verse of Scripture say what you want it to mean. It meant what it meant when Paul wrote to the Philippians. It had a historical context, so to get to the meaning of a text, you have to study its history, you have to study its grammar, you have to study other Scriptures and the theology of the Scriptures and bring them to bear upon those verses. You can’t just read a verse and pull it out of context and make it say whatever you want it to say. I actually hear people preaching that way, where a pastor will read a verse and then say a bunch of stuff that maybe isn’t really even wrong or unbiblical, but it wasn’t what the verse meant and wasn’t what the verse was all about. They just drew an idea out of the verse, which wasn’t really the intention of that verse. Expositional preaching is basically saying what the text says. It’s pulling out of the text the meaning of the text. I believe that’s what Paul means when he says, “Preach the word.”

The preacher’s first aim is to discover the text writer’s intended meaning and to preach its meanings. The preacher’s second aim is to let the text speak again through the sermon the same message of the text writer. I want to know what Paul meant by what he said. I don’t want to know what you think it means or what I think it means or what we feel like it means. We want to know what it means, right? Have you ever been in a home Bible study where everybody’s like, “I think it means this,” and “I think it means that,” “I think it means this,” and “I think it means that,” by the end of the discussion, nobody knows what it means. I don’t know about you, but I don’t like people to take me out of context. It has always bugged me when I’ll make a statement and people will say, “What did you really mean by that?” “What do you mean, what do I mean?” “Well, what did you really mean?” “What I meant was what I actually said!” “Yeah, but you must’ve meant something else.” “No. I say what I mean, and I mean what I say.” God says what He means and means what He says.

When you’re reading the Bible, you have different kinds of literature—poetry, history, prophecy, teaching in the epistles. You have to take all that into consideration. Good preaching basically says what the Bible says. It’s teaching the Word of God with nothing added, nothing subtracted. It’s faithful exposition. This is the only way to truly preach the Word. Today it’s popular for preachers to be famous orators or powerful speakers; and it’s okay to use humor, illustrations, to have practical application, but it must be consistent with the meaning of the text. I’m absolutely convinced that your average person in the pew doesn’t really know, isn’t discerning enough, to understand what real biblical preaching is because we’re not Bereans.

We don't study the Bible. We don't ask ourselves, "Is that verse he just quoted out of context? Is that what that verse really means? Is that what the author really meant?" You can use verses out of context to say things that aren't really even biblical.

The next four commands tell us what should characterize true biblical preaching or how to preach the Word. First, it should be done with urgency. (If you're taking notes, write this down.) Notice it says, "...be instant," urgent, "in season, out of season," so it doesn't matter what time of the year it is, what century we're living in, we need to preach God's Word with a sense of urgency. You do it "...instant in season," and "out of season." Actually, this means that this type of preaching is always en vogue. It's always God's will, always God's purpose, and always God's intention. Now, preaching is truth through personality, so it's going to change a little bit in style but the content must be biblical or it's not true biblical preaching. There's no substitute for this kind of preaching. It's to be done in season and out of season—always on duty.

I'm not a hunter, but there's a hunting season. I'm not a fisherman, but there's a fishing season, and you do it seasonally. Did you know it's always open season for preaching the Word? It's always the time, the right time, to be preaching the Word, and we do it with relevancy. How do we do that? By "...reprove, rebuke, exhort," you reprove, you exhort and you rebuke. What does that mean? The word "reprove" in verse 2 means to convince of sin. It's to convince of sin by argument. It's to preach the Word to the intellect and to bring conviction of sin. A preacher worth his salt isn't afraid to preach sin. He doesn't gloss over those sins that will offend individuals. You also rebuke. It means to chide or to scold or to place blame. A lot of pastors are afraid to preach the sins of the Bible, and in our time and in our culture, in our world today, it's even getting more difficult. If you preach on the sin of homosexuality, you always get a backlash—believe it or not, even in this church. People say, "Well, I don't think it's a sin, I don't think it's wrong." Have you read your Bible? Do you know what God's Word says? To be able to preach against pride, jealousy, unforgiveness, backbiting and slander, fornication, adultery, stealing, lying. These are sins that are listed in the Bible, and the preacher shouldn't pull any punches. You shouldn't go out of your way to, "Okay, every week I'm going to preach on sins," but whatever is in the text, you preach it.

One of the values of preaching through the Bible is you have to deal with all the text. There are some pastors that when they come to the subject of divorce, they jump over it. They skip over it. Why? Because it's a sensitive subject. It might hurt somebody's feelings, and they might be offended. Maybe they've been through a divorce, that's true, and it should be preached compassionately and understandingly, but we should be able to proclaim what the Bible says about it. We shouldn't be afraid or ashamed of what the Bible has to say about that situation. We shouldn't be afraid of the Scriptures to exhort, to rebuke, and to reprove.

Thirdly, it says to exhort there in verse 2. That's encouragement. Thank God it's not just preaching sin, but it's preaching encouragement. That's to preach to the emotion, to comfort. "God loves you. God will forgive you. If we confess our sin, God is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Our job as preachers, someone said, is to afflict

the comfortable and to comfort the afflicted. I like that. I don't come in purposely to make you uncomfortable, and I don't take any delight or pleasure in preaching things that kind of convict people, but if the Word is preached faithfully and God's Spirit brings conviction, don't shoot the errand boy. Don't get upset with the delivery boy. I'm just a herald delivering the message.

Notice the teaching should be done patiently (verse 2), "...with all longsuffering." Whenever you have that longsuffering, it has in the context the idea of with people. You're not to resort in your preaching to human pressure or techniques to try to influence people. You're to trust God's Spirit to work through God's Word. You're to have faith in the power of God's Word and the work of God's Spirit working through His Word to change lives and being patient with people that God will work in their hearts. It takes time for fruit to grow.

Fourthly, the Scriptures are to be taught intelligently. Look at it in verse 2, "...and doctrine." Good preaching must have doctrinal content. The word "doctrine" is actually the word teaching. A lot of people today say, "I don't want doctrine, I just want practical teaching. I want real rubber meets the road on how to live the Christian life," but the misnomer there is you can't live the Christian life if you don't know what it is. You can't worship God if you don't know who He is. How we live the Christian life is based upon doctrine—teaching—understanding God and who He is in His Word. God's Spirit doesn't work in a vacuum or a void. There's no premium on ignorance. Again, one of the great voids in preaching today in the church is a lack of doctrinal content. It's real practical, life-situational kind of preaching, but it's not based on exposition of Scripture and an explanation of the doctrines that are contained in those Scriptures. Actually, as you go through the Word of God, and you explain a text in its historical, grammatical context, also its theological context. What theology can we derive from that? By the way, theology just means study of God, knowledge of God, so what do we learn about God? What do we learn about Jesus? What do we learn about salvation? What do we learn about heaven? What do we learn about hell? We want to learn. When you come to church you should actually learn. You should come with your Bible. You should come desiring to learn the Word of God, so it should be taught intelligently with doctrine.

In Ephesians 4:11, Paul says that God has given to the church pastor-teachers, so there is to be the instruction. In 1 Timothy 3:2, one of the qualifications for an elder or pastor is that they are to be able to teach, so to be urgent in his approach, to be relevant in his application, to be patient in his manner, and intelligent in his presentation.

Paul begins in verses 3-8 (we may only get to verse 5), telling us the reasons for this charge to preach the Word. By the way, a lot of people today think that expository preaching is not en vogue. It's not what people want. People want topical sermons, they are life situational, they want them to feel good and so forth; and that may be true, but the preacher's motive is not to give to the people what they want, it's to be faithful to the Lord as to His Word. I don't want you to be offended by that or freak out by that, but I don't sit around during the week and try to think, What's going to really make these people happy? What should I preach about? That God wants them rich, God's gonna prosper them. That's what people want to hear.

My motive is opening the Bible, taking a text that God has led me to, and then reading it, explaining it, and applying it—it's that simple—so that when you come, you're actually getting God's Word. That's what it means to preach God's Word, not for me to have an idea and then find some verses in the Bible that I can throw into my little speech to make it sound like a biblical sermon—it's kind of like a pep talk with verses thrown in from all around the Bible—but to have a text and then to look at the context and to explain it grammatically, historically, and theologically so that you go away going, "Wow! The Bible makes sense. Wow! I understand the Bible. Wow! This is not just some old dusty Book, this is really cool!" You should learn and grow in your knowledge and understanding, and it should also whet your appetite to study the Bible as well. I also believe that when a preacher is preaching the Word that he is modeling for the people how to interpret the Word, how to rightly divide the Word, and how to study the Word in the way he handles the Word in the pulpit. If he uses it out of context, it gives the idea to the people that you can just tear the Bible out of context and make it say whatever you want it to say.

Let me give you the reasons for the charges, and I'll try not to tarry on them. The first is because the Word of God is true. That goes back to 2 Timothy 3:16, it's given by inspiration of God. Why should we preach the Word? It's God's Word, that's why! When the Bible speaks, God speaks. God still even speaks through what He's spoken. Secondly, the Word is profitable, 2 Timothy 3:15-17. It tells us what is right; it tells us what is wrong. Watch tv, watch Hollywood, listen to popular music, talk to the people on the street and ask: Does anybody know what's right or wrong in this culture anymore? Does anybody have a fixed point for knowing what is right or what is wrong? We've become what's called promiscuous. Have you ever heard that term, promiscuous? What that means is we're permitting today what we didn't permit yesterday. The things you would never have thought would go on in our culture are happening. The things that 10 years ago, 20 years ago, 30 years ago, even just a couple of years ago, you never thought would happen are happening.

I don't know about you, but I'm almost shocked every day to see what's going on in our world. There's this constant shifting of our mores in our culture. There's no fixed point, and if there is no God, there's no final authority. If there's no final authority, then there isn't any real right or wrong, there isn't any real moral standard other than what we conclude as right or wrong, what we devise, what we decide, and might becomes right and what I wanna do, I'll do it. I'll usurp my power over you, and if Hitler wants to kill six million Jews, he can do that and no one can tell him that's wrong. On what basis do you do that? "Well, It's not nice." Who says it's not nice? We all have our own thing, and that's why the Bible says every man was doing that which was right in their own eyes. We're kind of like back in the book of Judges, we have no standards. Why do we preach the Word? Because it tells us what is right, what is wrong, how to get right, and how to stay right.

If someone comes to me and they want to know about marriage, I don't have anything to tell you other than what the Bible says. If someone comes to me and says...a woman came to me Sunday and shared her four-year-old grandson died. She lost a four-year-old grandson, and she was just brokenhearted. I can open my Bible and talk about heaven and where babies go

when they die, young infants go when they die, that there's hope in Jesus. I don't give them philosophy. I don't give them science. Science isn't going to comfort her heart. Science isn't going to tell you where you go beyond the grave. It's only the Word of God. (I'm going to start a new series Easter Sunday in 1 Corinthians 15. We're going to go about eight weeks on what happens after you die, what's beyond the grave, is there a resurrection of our body, will we rise again, will we go to heaven, what's it gonna be like, and what's the resurrection of the body. We're going to kick it off on Easter Sunday with the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is the first fruits of those who sleep.) When someone needs help, we need to open the Bible and say, "This is what God says in His Word," and when God speaks, the argument's over, right? It's like the final word, so it's God's Word, that's why we preach it. The Word is profitable, that's why we preach it.

In 2 Timothy 4:1, we will be judged by God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, that's why we preach it. I'm going to answer to God. In verses 3-4, finally back to our text, dark days are coming. Notice it in verse 3, "For the time will come when they will not endure," or put up with or tolerate, "sound doctrine," teaching, "but after their own lusts," or desires, "shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth," which is the Word that is preached, "and shall be turned unto fables." So, "For," or because, Paul is giving the reason that we should preach the Word, because "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine," they won't tolerate or put up with sound doctrine. That day, that time, has come; and what happens with the pastor is that sometimes they'll leave preaching the Word because they want to grow the church, they want to appease the people, or they want to be popular or palatable so they won't be faithful to the Word. They want to impress people and then the authority shifts to the preacher and the glory goes to the preacher. The focus is no longer the Word of God. The preacher is not eclipsed by the Scriptures, the preacher gets all of the attention.

Notice they have "itching ears." I love what Harry Allen Ironside said. He said, "They want preachers who will tickle their fancy not trouble their conscience." I like that. "Don't tell me I'm a sinner, tell me I'm okay. Tell me God want's me healthy and wealthy." They want their ears tickled. It's an itch for novelty. The itching ears are the people's not the preacher's. The preachers are the one that are doing the itching. When the preachers are preaching, they don't say, "Preach it, brother," they say, "Itch it, brother, itch it. Ahhh, that feels good. Scratch it." Ironside goes on to say the preachers don't have itching ears but they have itching palms because they usually want money as well. They want to say whatever is going to help them get rich. They're lining their pockets. It's not hard to find a preacher that will build a golden calf for you to worship.

Notice in verse 4, "They shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." They don't want God's Word, so this is part of the last days apostasy and departure from the faith. When they go to church, this is what happens. When they go to church, they don't say, "Is what the preacher is saying biblical? Is what the preacher is saying scriptural? Is what the preacher is saying what God says?" They say, "Is he saying what I want to hear? Is the preacher saying what makes me feel good? Is the preacher saying what makes me feel

happy, or is the preacher saying what the Bible says?" What we want is to palate an appetite for God's Word, not to have our fancy tickled or our ears tickled to hear what we want to hear.

What should Timothy do? He should do what we should do—not give up, not get discouraged, not stop preaching but continue preaching the Word. He needs to follow Paul's example because in verse 4 it says, "And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables," fairytales, made up fanciful stories. We're going to look at verse 5 and we're going to stop there. I almost can't resist going to the end of the eighth verse, but I want to stop here and we'll continue next week. Notice verse 5, "But watch thou in all things," here's what Paul says in conclusion to Timothy, "...watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." That statement "make full proof of thy ministry" means fulfill your ministry. God has given you a ministry, fulfill it. Keep it. Do what God has called you to do.

Notice in verse 5 he says, "...watch thou in all things," that actually means be sober. The NIV translates that, "But you, keep your head in all situations," be watchful, be sober. Don't be intoxicated by the philosophies of the world, and don't be seduced by the current trends in the church. There are always different fads and trends that float through the church, but the preacher of the Word should be consistent and not be influenced by the trends and the popular movements of the day. He is to "...endure afflictions," be willing to suffer for the truth of the gospel like Paul who had suffered and the believers throughout church history. Don't water down the Word for pragmatic reasons to escape suffering. Be faithful to preach, and when you preach faithfully the Word, you will encounter satanic opposition. Verse 5 as well, notice, "...do the work of an evangelist." This definitely has clear application to every Christian. Timothy was a pastor. He wasn't an evangelist, but he was to do evangelistic work. Always remember the unbeliever—always preaching the gospel. When we go out about our business, we should always be concerned about sharing the gospel with those who don't know the good news of Jesus Christ.

Paul closes in verse 5, "...make full proof of thy ministry," fulfill your ministry or discharge all the duties of your ministry. The darker the days get the more we must seek to be faithful to preach the Word.

I realize that what we've covered tonight you're thinking, I could've stayed home. I'm not a preacher. I don't preach the Bible. If you listen to this text tonight and you understand this text tonight, you and I are all supposed to be preachers of the gospel. You preach to people in ways and places I could never reach. Do you know that? They're not going to come to Revival Christian Fellowship, especially not on a Wednesday night. Tomorrow some of you go to work, some of you go to school, some of you encounter people in the neighborhood. You'll go about your business. You have an opportunity to preach the gospel. "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace," to bring the good news of Jesus Christ. Amen?

How should you do it? You should do it intelligently with urgency. You should do it patiently. The same way Paul told Timothy to preach the Word, you preach the Word and do it faithfully.

You discharge your ministry that God has entrusted to you. What has God called you to do? What has God called you to be? When you get to heaven, you're not going to stand before me and give an account; and I'm not going to stand before you and have to give an account. I'm going to stand before Jesus, and what I want to hear is, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant...enter thou into the joy of thy lord." He's not going to say, "Well done, thou good and intelligent servant," or "Well done, thou good and creative servant," or "Well done, thou good and tricky servant," or "Well done, thou good and amazing servant," faithful servant. He's just called us to be faithful to what God has called us to do. Whatever God has called you to do, whatever God has called you to be, you must be faithful at that. Soon we're going to be in heaven, and soon we will be rewarded.

We didn't finish the passage down to verse 8, but Paul looks around and Paul looks back and Paul looks forward. Paul says, "...there is laid up for me a crown," and the next few verses get so amazing as Paul talks about the end of his life and he's being poured out and his departure is at hand and he fought the fight, he's finished the course, he's run the race and there's a crown waiting for him. Is there a crown waiting for you? "...all them also that love his appearing," are you looking for the coming again of Jesus Christ? Are you anticipating the Lord's return? Are you living for Him? I hope so. Let's pray.