

## 2 Timothy 4 • Four Personal Charges

### Introduction

This closing chapter of Paul's last known Epistle is filled with extremely practical advice when it comes to how we should act and what we should be doing in the Last Days. Paul's personal appeal to Timothy contains four personal charges which are far more important for the End Times Christian than merely being able to create a chart of the major eschatological events. After all, even should we clearly recognize "the signs of the times" (Mt. 16:3), we must still conduct ourselves properly and not merely "survive" them, but maintain our Christian faith and witness. More than the final words of a teacher to his favorite pupil, this is a teaching about how to carry out ministry in spite of the circumstances.

<sup>1</sup>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: <sup>2</sup>preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. <sup>3</sup>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, <sup>4</sup>and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

### [Read v.1-4]

#### Q: How did Paul close out the section just before this?

A: By encouraging Timothy to continue putting God's Word into practice personally in his own life.

*You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

— 2 Timothy 3:14-15

#### Q: How does that compare and contrast with Paul's opening charge in this section?

A: Whereas previously an appeal for personally applying God's Word, here He charges Timothy to preach God's Word to others.

**Application:** Preaching God's Word alone is always insufficient if we fail to first put it into practice ourselves.

#### Q: What instruction did Paul give at the close of the previous section which should be used here to define "preach the word"?

A: Paul elaborated on what it takes to really be able to rightly handle God's Word.

*All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*

— 2 Timothy 3:16-17

#### Q: How is this affirmed in v.2?

A: With the qualifying terms "reprove, rebuke, exhort with great patience and instruction" mirroring "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness".

**Application:** These terms all have in common a description of changed behavior. The purpose of God's Word, both applied personally and in our preaching of it, is to change behavior.

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**Q: What if the timing just doesn't feel right? What if we don't feel adequately prepared in advance when it comes to God's Word?**

A: "...be ready in season and out of season". (v.2)

**Application:** How prepared do you feel right now? What should you do about it?

**Q: Is it enough to simply tell people the truth?**

A: The qualifier "with great patience" indicates that it is always important how we treat others and that we live up to Paul's instruction in Eph. 4:15, "Speaking the truth in love".

**Q: In v.4, what further defines the kind of preaching we should be engaged in?**

A: It is defined as "sound doctrine", a way of stating that the object is to teach biblical truth according to God's Word, the doctrinal foundation established by Christ and the Apostles.

**Q: What are the characteristics of the apostate—those ultimately rejecting the truth of God's Word?**

1. They want to "have their ears tickled". (v.3) They only want to hear what pleases them.
2. They leave sound doctrinal teachers for "teachers in accordance with their own desires". (v.3) They want a license to behave in the flesh.
3. They exchange "the truth and...turn aside to myths" (v.4) They end up exactly like the false teachers Paul spoke about in the previous chapter, going "from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived". (2 Ti. 3:13)

**Application:** It is always important to both put God's Word into practice and to preach it to others, but in the Last Days this is even more important.

<sup>5</sup>But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. <sup>6</sup>For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. <sup>7</sup>I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; <sup>8</sup>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.

**[Read v.5-8]**

**Q: What is the biggest contrast presented in these verses?**

A: The contrast of Timothy, whose life and work still lay outstretched before him, and that of Paul, who is coming to the end of both his life and ministry.

**Q: What is the second charge Paul issues?**

A: "...fulfill your ministry". (v.5) This may be thought of as a practical application of the Parable of the Talents (Mt. 25:14-30) or the Parable of the Minas. (Lk. 19:11-27)

*"Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes.*

— Matthew 24:45-46

**Q: How is this charge to be accomplished on our part?**

1. "...be sober in all things..." (v.5) Be alert and controlled in speech and conduct.
2. "...endure hardship..." (v.5) Meet whatever suffering and trials may come. This is a recurring theme in this Epistle, most notably 2 Ti. 1:8, 2:3 and 2:9.
3. "...do the work of an evangelist..." (v.5) Proclaim the Gospel message at every opportunity.

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**Application:** Note how these qualifications for a Word-abiding Christian who lives **IN** the world but not **OF** the world contrast to those in v.3-4 who reject the Word to please themselves in the here and now.

**Q: What does the reference to Paul's "being poured out as a drink offering" mean in this context?**

A: A drink offering is something secondary to the main sacrifice. Paul is describing his secondary role to the sacrifice of Christ, a way of speaking to Timothy in a Hebraic way that not only is the work on earth not yet finished, but being passed on from one generation to the next.

**Q: What does Paul here suggest as being his lifelong motivation for faithfully following Christ and fulfilling his ministry? Was he really only focused on "the crown of righteousness"?**

A: The greater motivation was that Paul "loved His appearing". (v.8)

*For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.*

— 2 Corinthians 5:14-15

**Application:** An important characteristic of the Last Days Christian is personal faithfulness in concert with the strongest desire anticipating His appearing.

<sup>9</sup>Make every effort to come to me soon; <sup>10</sup>for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. <sup>11</sup>Only Luke is with me. Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service. <sup>12</sup>But Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. <sup>13</sup>When you come bring the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments. <sup>14</sup>Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. <sup>15</sup>Be on guard against him yourself, for he vigorously opposed our teaching. <sup>16</sup>At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them. <sup>17</sup>But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth. <sup>18</sup>The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

**[Read v.9-18]**

**Q: How might we generally divide this list into two groups of people according to their behavior?**

A: One group remained faithful and on Paul's side, the other rejected and left Paul.

**Q: What general behaviors do those who deserted and rejected Paul represent?**

1. Demas "loved this present world". (v.9) These are those who seek to enrich themselves in this life to the detriment of the next.
2. Alexander the coppersmith "did me much harm...he vigorously opposed our teaching". (v.14) These are those who seek to do us personal harm by undermining, if possible, our presentation of the Gospel and God's Word.
3. "...no one supported me, but all deserted me". (v.16) These are those who will not take a stand for Christ with us.

*"Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved.*

— Matthew 10:21-22

**Application:** Repeatedly throughout Scripture one of the chief characteristics of the Last Days which we are warned of in advance is the desertion and betrayal of many who were previously the closest to us.

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**Q: But what as the ultimate success which the Lord brought to this situation because of one man's faithfulness?**

A: "...so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all Gentiles might hear". (v.17)

**Application:** Paul was a living example of what he charged Timothy to be, both personally living according to God's Word and preaching the Gospel regardless of the circumstances.

**Observation:** How does Paul's reference to being "rescued out of the lion's mouth" and "from every evil deed" mirror the experience of Daniel?

<sup>19</sup>Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. <sup>20</sup>Erastus remained at Corinth, but Trophimus I left sick at Miletus. <sup>21</sup>Make every effort to come before winter. Eubulus greets you, also Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brethren. <sup>22</sup>The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

**[Read v.19-22]**

**Q: What is very different about this list of people from that shared in the previous section?**

A: These are all Paul's friends.

**Q: Given the context of this final section, what might be a greater application of this charge to greet Paul's friends?**

A: In spite of all Paul has gone through, in spite of still facing the distinct possibility of death, Paul is still considerate and concerned for others.

**Application:** It ultimately comes down to the way we minister to others regardless of the circumstances. In the Last Days, Jesus warns that "most people's love will grow cold" (Mt. 24:12), a reminder of what is most important about our own behavior in that time.