

“PREACH THE WORD”

II TIMOTHY 4:1-5

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INTRODUCTION

God’s Word outlines for us the priority for ministry, and **THAT IS PREACHING!** Note what the early apostles decided in the church at Jerusalem in Acts 6:2-4. “Give ourselves” has the idea of “be strong toward”; this is what a man should spend his strength on! Compare Paul in I Cor. 1:17—“Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel.” Note v. 21—It has pleased God to save men “through the foolishness of preaching.” Rom. 10:14—“How shall they hear without a preacher?” It is urgent that we carefully handle the Word of God.

I. THE IDENTITY OF THE CHARGE (2)—“**PREACH THE WORD**”

A. Act as a “Herald”—proclaiming an authoritative message given by someone else, with conviction and urgency. He is the mouth of his master.

1. “The Word” is the object and content of the preaching—cf. 3:15 & 3:16; Gal. 6:6 for “the word.”
2. He must not falsify the message—**No substitution.**
3. He must not leave out anything—**No subtraction.**
4. He must not add anything not commanded—**No addition.**

*A faithful minister is one who “reads the Bible ‘just as it reads, and expounds it just as it stands’” [Minnick, quoting W. G. T. Shedd, *Homiletics and Pastoral Theology*; BV. 32]. Shedd concludes,*

“He who has imbibed it from the close and penetrating study of the words, clauses, sentences, paragraphs, and sections of the sacred volume, puts the seal of the Eternal Spirit upon everything that he writes and everything that he utters” (Ibid).

WE MUST PREACH EXACTLY WHAT GOD HAS SAID—NO MORE AND NO LESS.

Now, let us illustrate this from the passage at hand—4:1-5. The outline reflects the content of what Paul has said in vv. 1-5. **The preacher must not manufacture some artificial framework upon which to build his own thoughts—he must explain accurately the Holy Spirit’s thoughts as given through the human author! To do otherwise is to grieve the Holy Spirit who has written the word. INTERPRETATION AND PREACHING ARE SOLEMN MATTERS.**

The bottom line of true biblical preaching is that the preacher is under compulsion by his divine Master; in reality, he does not choose his topic, for **God chooses it and he proclaims it.**

II. THE WITNESSES TO THE CHARGE (1)—

- The witness shows present approval of the validity of the charge.
- The witness gives future verification that the charge was made.
- Paul is **dead serious**, for his time of departure is at hand! He places Timothy under the oath and points out that Jesus *is the coming judge to whom Timothy will give account.*

A. God

B. Christ Jesus

1. The imminently coming One—He is about to judge, His footsteps are at the door!
2. The Judge of the living ones and the dead ones—and he is evaluating Timothy’s service.

III. THE BASES OF THE CHARGE (1)—**Both His appearing and His Kingdom are sure and certain.**

A. Christ’s Appearing—Epiphany; see I Thes. 4:13-18; I Cor. 15:51-53—judgment of believers

B. Christ’s Kingdom—His kingship and realm over which He rules.

IV. THE EXECUTION OF THE CHARGE (2)—commands from God/Paul.

A. When is it executed?

1. The Preacher stands ready in season—“Opportune” times.
2. The Preacher stands ready out of season—“Inopportune” times.
 - Timothy must always be on duty.

- The preacher must not ask “is this a suitable occasion for preaching?” Ask rather, “**Why should not this be a suitable occasion?**” Paul himself set a good example of being ready in all seasons.
- B. In What Ways is it executed?
1. Through Reproof—“bring to light, convict, convince.”
 2. Through Rebuke—a censure, or even a positive charge like Mt. 16:20—“Tell no one!”
 3. Through Exhortation—Urge, exhort, or even comfort.
 - We must not comfort those who need to be rebuked, or we assist them in their sins.
 - But, we must not fail to exhort and encourage those under conviction and who are responsive or we add to their burdens and they will despair.
- C. In What Manner is it executed?
1. With “longsuffering”—When the listener is obstinate and perverse, the preacher might be tempted to anger and vengeance; he must rather be “long in temper” in such circumstances.
 2. With Teaching—“doctrine”—See 2:24 above. **Rebuke without instruction is to leave the root cause of error untouched.**
- V. THE REASON FOR THE CHARGE—“The Coming Time” (3-4)
- He warns Timothy that the season will come when people will not endure sound doctrine. Future heresy is viewed as the outgrowth of present error.
- A. Men will not endure sound doctrine.
- Unfortunately, what “they will not endure” is not something loathsome, troublesome, or difficult; it is “sound doctrine” that is meant for man’s spiritual “health” and well-being. Healthy in itself and producing good spiritual health.
- B. Men will pile up teachers to themselves according to their own desires.
- Not being content with healthy teaching as seen in the first clause of this verse, they turn to and accumulate to themselves teachers.
 - The implication is that these teachers are not teaching the “sound doctrine” but myths.
 - The fallen away believers accumulate to themselves numerous such teachers.
 - The measurements of these teachers is their own lusts—perverse desires.
- C. Men will have itching ears.
- The verb is used figuratively of curiosity that looks for interesting and spicy bits of information; the itching is eased by the message of the new teachers.
 - We may compare the Athenians (Acts 17:21) who were always telling or listening to some newer teaching—soon discarding the older one.
 - A heart that is carnal and self-willed will always have ears that are itching for self-gratification.
 - So, the fault is not always, or even often, with the **herald** of the Gospel, but with the **hearers**.
- D. Men will turn their hearing away from the truth.
1. “The Truth” is another term for “the word” and “Scripture.”
 2. Compare the Jewish leaders with Stephen in Acts 7:57.
- E. Men will turn unto myths.
1. They turn from the truth and are turned to myths—the verb is passive.
 2. When people close their ears to truth, they become easy prey to every Satanic influence, and are easily turned aside to error. Men will turn to any other fad that will give a new momentary thrill to their itching ears and morbid minds.
 3. Many have no desire to hear about their sin and the damnation it will bring them, or about the necessity of inward and outward change brought about by the sound teaching of God’s word as noted in II Tim. 3:15-17.
 - It is a recognized fact that most cultists were formerly members of churches.
- But, in strong contrast with these, YOU Timothy, teach truth and fulfill your ministry.**

- VI. THE RESPONSIBILITIES ACCOMPANYING THE CHARGE (5)—four more commands to Timothy
- A. Be Sober in all things. Be alert, steady, sober, under control—not swept away with false teachings.
 - B. Endure Affliction.
 - Such affliction often comes to the faithful minister (cf. 3:10-12) and sometimes from “the religious crowd as with Paul in many synagogues and later in the temple].
 - Far too often ministers have feared “ostracism” of fellow clergy, the “displeasure” of ecclesiastical hierarchy, or the “cutting off” of financial resources and have therefore caved in to pressure.
 - C. Do (the) work of an evangelist.
 - Let your work be evangelistic in character.
 - Timothy is told to do the work of an evangelist as part of his duties, but not a description of the whole; Paul did not specifically say that he was an evangelist.
 - D. Fulfill your ministry—your “service”; finish it completely.

CONCLUSION

It is before God that we will be judged. Therefore:

- 1) We must do our work carefully and faithfully.
- 2) We must not live in the fear of men—they are not our judges!
- 3) We must keep going even amidst difficulties—we serve Him, not ourselves.

Nothing can take the place of the importance of proper preaching of the word of God.

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