

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

SEPTEMBER 1ST, 2019 // 2 TIMOTHY

PREACH THE WORD (2 TIM. 4:1-5)

Paul didn't have a lot of time left, so he gave Timothy a final and emphatic charge in the last part of this letter.

- It was a very serious charge because he issued it, "in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus" (vs. 1).
- Ultimately our calling in life is between us and the Lord- we will give an account one day to Him for how we lived our lives.

"Christ Jesus...who will judge the living and the dead"- all of us, nonbelievers and believers, will stand at the judgment before Him.

- The inevitability of this judgment should cause very careful living in the present.
- "...by His appearing and His kingdom"- the appearance of His kingdom could come at any moment, and so we must be ready and at work doing what He's commanded.

The charge to Timothy was to "preach the word" (vs. 2)- "proclaim publicly" (preach) the Christian Gospel and the message of Christ.

- "Be ready in season and out of season"- we're not to compartmentalize our faith or only share it when it's convenient, but at any time when we have the opportunity (1 Pet. 3:15).
- "Reprove, rebuke, and exhort"- reprove & rebuke imply correction, and exhort means to "encourage".

Timothy is told to do things with "complete patience & teaching" (vs. 2).

- Sometimes it's easy for us to get discouraged when we don't see immediate results from sharing truth with someone else.
- ...in Christ is often a very slow process, but we can't be frustrated with people and write them off if they don't show signs of immediate maturity.
- Timothy is also told to also explain things thoroughly and completely ("teaching").

Despite faithful teaching of God's word with patience, kindness, and clarity, the "time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching" (vs. 3).

- People won't want to hear truth because confrontations with truth produce a great deal of discomfort, especially for those unwilling to submit to its authority.
- People in the last days will be "religious" (3:5), but what will they do?

They will "accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions", and will turn from truth to "myths" (vs. 3-4).

- In a time when people will be "lovers of self", they won't be interested in hearing any message that requires submission to someone other than self.
- They'll only want to hear pleasant or easy things that reinforce a self-centered message, so they'll find teachers that tell them what they want to hear. (Isa. 30:9-11)

Paul wants to make sure Timothy is a preacher of the Word and teacher of truth, so he tells him,

1)"...Be sober-minded." 2)"...Endure suffering." 3)"...Do the work of the evangelist." 4)"...Fulfill your ministry."

- In at time where "myths" abound about what it means to know God and follow Christ, we do well to keep a sober mind and use discernment.

MYTH #1:The Gospel of Self **MYTH #2:**The Gospel of Cheap Grace **MYTH #3:**The Gospel of Universalism **"I HAVE FINISHED THE RACE..." (2 TIM. 4:6-8)**

Paul had already provided Timothy with good reasons to stay faithful to the ministry: Jesus is returning & there will be an increase of falsehood & wickedness in the last days.

- Now Paul gives Timothy another reason to stay with the hard work of ministry: "the time of my departure has come" (vs. 6).
- Paul will die soon, and Timothy must carry on the work.

Paul states, "I am already being poured out as a drink offering" (vs. 6)- imagery that comes from biblical rites of devotion given to God.

- A drink offering of wine would accompany the sacrifice of an animal or grain.
- Just as Jesus, the Lamb, was sacrificed to remove our sin guilt, so we're called to "pour out" our lives in service as expressions of worship (Rom. 12:1).

But Paul's imagery of a drink offering being poured out was also possibly a reference to his impending death.

- As a Roman citizen, the method of Paul's execution was beheading, so the imagery of wine poured on the ground describes what he'll endure.
- Paul then offers 3 statements as a short review of his life that will soon be over.

"I've fought the good fight"- sometimes serving God and living for Him feels like a war and a fight, but it's one worth fighting.

- "I have finished the race"- Paul viewed the successful completion of his life as a race that he'd endured to the end as a marathon, not a sprint.
- "I have kept the faith"- in his life and in his doctrine, Paul had stayed the course with integrity and not drifted into falsehood or unholiness.

"There is laid up for me the crown of righteousness..." (vs. 8)

- Biblical writers often used the metaphor of a crown to describe the rewards God promises to those who faithfully endure.
- For Paul, all suffering, persecution, disappointment, and loneliness was worth it because of the reward of being with, seeing, and being rewarded by Christ (2 Cor. 4:16-17).

"...not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing" (vs. 8).

- For an unbeliever, the appearing of Jesus at the end of days is a terrifying picture.
- But for those who have trusted in Him, His appearing is something we love.
- We will be see Him, be rewarded by Him, we will be with Him, and we will be like Him!

PERSONAL INSTRUCTIONS (2 TIM. 4:9-22)

Paul was an incredible man that God used mightily to write scripture, plant churches, and preach the gospel- but he was also human.

- As a human being, he at times faced loneliness and needed friends.
- So he urges Timothy to "do your best to come to me soon" (vs. 9).
- Isolation is not God's intention (Gen. 2:18), but we have to seek out community.

In verses 10-15, Paul lists 8 people he's formed relationships with over the years.

- Five of them- Titus, Tychicus, Crescens, Luke, & Carpus- had been good friends and partners in ministry with him.
- If we want to finish our race well, we have to surround ourselves with caring, godly friends.
- Everyone needs accountability, company, and encouragement from friends.

But not all of the relationships Paul had formed over the years endured to the end of his life.

- His friend Demas had deserted him (vs. 10) because he "loved this present world".
- We don't know the details, but most likely the difficult lifestyle of suffering and persecution took a toll on Demas and he deserted Paul.
- It hurts to be deserted, but unfortunately it's the risk we take when we love people.

Paul wants to see his friend Mark (vs.11), but it wasn't always that way.

- When Paul went on his 1st missionary journey, Mark went with him, but some reason left in the middle of the trip (Acts 13:5,13).
- Later, Paul's friend Barnabas wanted to take Mark with them on a later trip, Paul objected, and as a result Paul & Barnabas disagreed and separated (Acts 15).

Somewhere along the way, Paul and John Mark were reconciled.

- Maybe Mark realized how immature, selfish, and cowardly his actions were on the 1st missionary journey and apologized to Paul.
- Maybe Paul reached out to him to forgive and offer him grace.

The relationships that we've been given are gifts from God and they're precious.

- At the end of our lives, what will matter most to us are the things we've done to serve God and our relationships.
- Satan hates it when reconciliation, forgiveness, and restoration in relationships happen, and he works overtime to make sure it doesn't happen.
- Are we willing to forgive and reconcile?

"Alexander" was an enemy to the gospel, so Paul warns Timothy of him in vs. 14.

- Paul writes of a pretrial hearing to determine the ground of the accusations against him, where "no one came to stand by me" (vs. 16).
- In spite of this, Paul knows that "the Lord stood by" him and that God would bring him safely into the kingdom (vs. 17-18).

The last few verses of this letter include personal greetings to friends and instructions to come visit "before winter" (vs. 21), most likely because travel in the Mediterranean was dangerous and difficult during that time of year.

- "The Lord be with your spirit" (vs. 22)- Paul is praying for God's continual ministry in and throughout Timothy's life. Even though Paul will be gone, the Lord will still be there with Timothy.

3 POINTS OF APPLICATION

1) Friendships, relationships and community are necessities for godly living. 2) The truth is unpopular and at times uncomfortable- don't stop listening to it or speaking it. 3) The Christian life is a marathon, but the reward for finishing is greater than the pain.