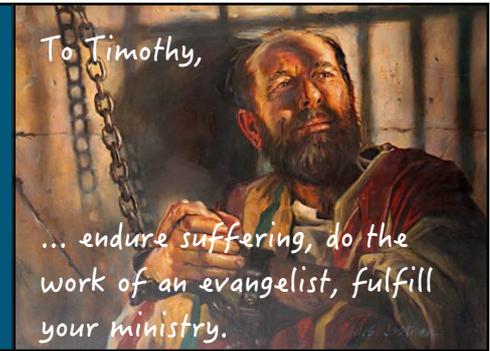


2 Timothy

Fulfill Your Ministry

Lesson 10



In the last eight verses of 2 Timothy chapter three, Paul tells Timothy (and all Christians) that persecution is to be expected. In fact, he says that “*all*” who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus “*will*” be persecuted. The level and nature of the persecution a Christian must endure will depend upon the time and place they live. Some Christians will face martyrdom while others will suffer no worse than ridicule, but every Christian should expect some degree of persecution and suffering. The good news is that Christians can overcome and are immeasurably aided by the God “*breathed*” Scriptures which contain the message of salvation and provide teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness to equip Christians for every good work.

Preach the Word 4:1-5

In chapter four, Paul presents Timothy with the solemn charge to preach the Word. The word “*charge*” shows this to be a formal call to the ministry of preaching.

The seriousness of the charge is evident since Paul delivers it “*in the presence of God and Christ Jesus.*” Paul gives Timothy this call with the knowledge and support of God and Christ Jesus. No commission can come from a higher authority than the Lord himself.

Paul appeals to the authority of Christ when he says that Christ Jesus will be the one to judge the living and the dead. All who are alive at the Second Coming as well as all who have already died will stand before the Lord to give account of their lives.

The Second Coming is again stressed by the phrase, “*his appearing and his kingdom.*” The Lord’s kingdom is made up of those in the church and of heaven itself. There is greater way Paul could have impressed upon Timothy the magnitude of this solemn call to preach the Word. It is made in the presence of the Creator of the Universe, the Lord who is coming again, and the one to whom every man and woman will give account.



Paul charges Timothy to preach the Word, and then presents the exhortations found in verse two, to show the proper attitude of the preacher along with the correct purpose and method of preaching.

The word “*preach*” means, to proclaim as a herald, and though “preaching” may sound outdated or distasteful to some in today’s world, it remains the method God has ordained for the proclamation of the gospel.

The content of preaching is the “*Word*.” Jesus is called “*the Word*” in John 1:1 and He must be the focus of preaching. The “*Word*” also includes the entire content of Scripture. We might paraphrase Paul’s instruction to Timothy in this way: “You are called to be a herald of the gospel of Christ, so you must announce to the world the truth of Christ Jesus as revealed in the Scriptures.”



Paul writes in Romans 10:14-17, “*How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.*”

1. From where does Paul say faith comes in Romans 10:17?

2. From where do men and women hear the good news?

3. What do questions 1 and 2 tell us about the importance of preaching?

Preaching requires readiness according to verse 2. The preacher is to be ready when it is convenient and when it is inconvenient. The purpose of preaching is to “*reprove, rebuke, and exhort.*”

4. At what times would preaching be convenient and when would it be inconvenient?

The word “*reprove*” means to convict or expose and has a goal of bringing one to a knowledge of their sin and a return to Christ. “*Rebuke*” is to express strong disapproval of wrong conduct with the hope of bringing a change in behaviour. “*Exhort*” means to strongly encourage so that the hearer’s faith might be strengthened.

The method of preaching includes “*complete patience*” and “*teaching.*” The preacher must be under control, long-suffering, and understanding. This balances the necessary task to reprove, rebuke, and exhort.

If the preacher is patient, and careful to offer explanation, people are much more likely to respond positively than if he only offered a stern condemnation. Correction is sometimes necessary, but it should be tempered by patience and sound teaching.

The preacher must carefully explain the Word of God to his hearers. Preaching is not simply a loud, emotional, or entertaining speech; it is reasonable and logical communication grounded in conveying the truth of the gospel through detailed instruction from the Scriptures. The intent of preaching is not just to inform, it is to bring a change in the life of the hearers.

Paul anticipates a time when preaching will become more challenging for Timothy (and other preachers) because “. . . *the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching . . .*” As bad as things were, when Paul wrote, he knew even harder times were ahead for the the preacher of sound (or true) doctrine. The word translated as “*endure*” means to tolerate, put up with, or bear and tells us that a time will come when many people will no longer listen to truth from the Scriptures.

5. How do we see Paul’s prophecy (that people will not endure sound teaching) fulfilled in our age?

The description of “*itching ears*” is another way of saying these people wanted to hear teaching that pleased them. They wanted to satisfy their own passions so they found teachers who would tell them what they wanted to hear. They abandoned truth for myths because they would not endure reproof, rebuke, and exhortation. Truth and its demands for holy living, moral actions, and faithful service didn’t please these hearers so they looked for something easier and less demanding.



6. Why would anyone give up the truth of the gospel for myths?

7. What are some of the spiritual “myths” prevalent in the world today?

The life of the preacher is addressed in verse 5. He is to be “*sober-minded*” meaning that he is to be of sound mind, self-controlled, level headed, watchful, and aware of what is happening.

8. The faithful preacher may have to “endure suffering.” What are some examples of the types of suffering the preacher may have endure?

Timothy is instructed to “*do the work of an evangelist.*” An evangelist is one who proclaims the gospel, establishes new congregations, and works to see the church grow to maturity. Evangelists are to set the church in order according to Titus 1:5. Specifically, this includes appointing elders in the new churches. Evangelist then work alongside the elders in the ministry of the local church.

The final phrase in verse 5 is “*fulfill your ministry.*” Timothy, along with every faithful preacher, has a vital ministry to perform. Paul is encouraging Timothy to not give up, but to see his ministry through to completion.



There is always pressure upon the preacher to lose heart when he becomes weary or discouraged. This can happen when he faces false teachers, like those about whom Paul has previously warned Timothy. It is even more possible when the people with whom he tries to work will no longer endure sound teaching, but rather look for someone who will tell them what they want to hear.

When people in the world hear the words “preacher,” “evangelist,” or “minister” they do not often react positively. Part of the reason for this is because some who have referred to themselves in this way have been greedy, dishonest, immoral, and distorters of truth. Others don’t like preachers because they call for repentance and a changed lifestyle.

The call to serve as a preacher of the gospel is one of the greatest and most important in the world, but it is a difficult task. Today, as much as ever before, the Lord needs faithful men who will take up the call to be preachers of the Word. The world is lost and the stakes could not be higher. An eternity in heaven or hell stands in the balance.

Scripture tells us it is through the foolishness of preaching that people hear the gospel and it is by hearing that faith comes. This means there is no greater task a man could undertake than becoming a preacher of the gospel. This is not an offer of a new occupation or career, but of a call to the ministry of proclaiming the life-changing gospel of truth which is the only hope for a world that is perishing.

An anonymous writer has said:

A job is one you choose;

A ministry is one Christ chooses for you.

A job depends on your abilities

A ministry depends on your availability to God.

In a job you expect to receive;

In a ministry you expect to give.

A job done well brings you self-esteem;

A ministry done well brings honour to Jesus Christ.

In a job you give something to get something;

In a ministry you return something that has already been given to you.

A job well done has temporal remuneration;

A ministry well done brings eternal rewards.