

THROUGH THE PERSPECTIVE GLASS: PREACHING THE WORD WITH HEAVEN IN MIND

2 Timothy 4:1-8

Paul could not have chosen stronger language than he did in verse 1, “I 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.”

Part of what he’s doing here is warning Timothy to avoid preaching for any reason or audience other than Jesus Himself. We should also be careful that we do our service for Jesus’ sake, rather than for self-gratification. We must check our motives.

Preach the Word

Broadly, preaching the Word means to communicate God’s word to other believers for *their* good. Under this definition, preaching is more than the Sunday sermon. We all preach the Word to one another. The Word—the Gospel—is the heart of the Christian faith.

Paul gives specifics about what preaching the Word looks like in verse 2: “In season and out, reprove, rebuke, and exhort with complete patience and teaching.” We must be constantly ready to share the Word to correct, encourage, and persevere with other believers.

Walking the straight and narrow: how to avoid wandering from the Truth

In verses 3-4, Paul promises Timothy that good preaching will go out of style. These are people who are not ignorant of the Gospel but have simply stopped caring about it. We can easily be tempted to follow their path, as the same passions that lead away from the Truth exist in all of us.

Paul instructs Timothy on how to guard against wandering in verse 5, “Always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.” To avoid wandering from the Truth, we must remain level-headed, endure suffering instead of escaping it, evangelize even if we’re bad at it, and serve in the ways God has enabled us to.

Jesus’ return and our reward

Paul says that “the time of my departure is near”. (v. 6) He is in prison in Rome and is facing his execution by the Roman authorities. Because he cannot continue in his ministry, he is passing the baton to Timothy. One of the reasons discipling others, especially younger believers, is that someday we will all die and someone else will do ministry in our place.

Paul looks forward to Jesus' second coming in verses 7-8, eagerly anticipating the reward he'll receive from Jesus. We must keep our good Savior in mind as we run our race on earth. While the world may say that following Jesus is a waste, Paul is adamant that following Jesus is the most worthwhile pursuit.

We need to preach the Word to one another because we are sinful and prone to wander. Make God's Word an important part of our interactions with other believers. Read it, pray it, memorize it, and speak it over one another. Our Lord Jesus is coming back!

Key Ideas: Remember Jesus and His second coming as we preach the Word to one another.

Application Questions:

What does it look like to preach the Word to one another? What usually stops us? (Read Psalm 1)

How do we keep ourselves from wandering from the Truth of the Gospel? What are the warning signs in our lives that we are being led away by our "own passions"? (v. 3)

Paul says in verse 7, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." What does faithfulness look like over a lifetime? What does faith in Jesus look like in your season of life?