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C0911 – March 18, 2009 – How To Survive In Apostasy

Tonight I want to, for a second week, stay away from Amos, my individual study of that book is continuing but I wanted to share with you the results of the Chafer Theological Seminary Pastors Conference that I attended last week. These are a real blessing to me as a pastor because this calling in life is a lonely calling; most people don't understand what a true pastor does. It isn't sitting in board rooms all day, meeting after meeting, managing a choir and the nursery and trying to keep Aunt Betty calm over some petty thing. And so to be with other pastors who know what it is we do behind closed doors in our offices and at home and with our congregations hour after hour, day after day, week after week, year after year is an encouragement, especially in the face of the quickening pace of apostasy.

Let me define that word apostasy for you briefly. Turn to 2 Tim. We just want to look at a few verses here to get the flavor of that word. 1 and 2 Timothy are a part of what are known as the Pastoral Epistles. Paul wrote these to Timothy, so Timothy is not the author of these, he's the recipient. Paul is the author. And by this time Paul's an older man, it's about AD65, and literally, according to chapter 4 verse 6, Paul thinks his death is near. So he doesn't have much time and when you don't have much time left, I think it almost needless to say that you don't waste words, you don't have time to waste words. And he spilled his last words on Timothy. We'll meet Timothy in the Book of Acts in Paul's second missionary expedition that we start this Sunday. Timothy was one of Paul's converts and on the return journey to Antioch he and Silas pick up Timothy as a young man, probably about 20 years of age and he stays with Paul for the rest of his life. And these are his closing instructions to him. He's about 35 at the time, he's my age and that's what Paul considers a young man, so when you read things like "don't let

people look down on your youth,” youth for Paul was your 30’s, so if you think I’m a youth, biblically you’re correct.

Now, there’s a contrast in chapter three between the apostates who hate truth and the godly who love truth. Chapter 3 develops that: verses 1-9 outline the apostates, 10-14 the godly. Let’s pick out a few verses that relate to apostasy, the concept of departure. 2 Tim 1:15. **“You are aware of the fact that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.”** Now remember Paul taught in Asia Minor for years and now look at the intense rejection of Paul, **“All who are in Asia turned away from me.”** Paul literally taught thousands, even hundreds of thousands of people in Asia. Now just a few years later they’d rejected Paul’s doctrine. Do you think that might be a part of the apostasy? Turn to chapter 2:16-18, he issues a command, **“But avoid worldly *and* empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, *men* who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some.”** Doctrinal departure. Go back to verse 16, that word **“avoid”** is a command, this is an order. If you’ve been in the military you understand what this means. If you haven’t you may not get it yet. The reason we don’t get it is because we’re a rebellious society, we don’t understand authority, but this is an authoritative, in your face command, **“Avoid worldly *and* empty chatter.”** It’s an order from the Commander in Chief of the universe. So what does he want us to do? **Avoid** certain discussions. People read this and they think my discussion has to be all about the Bible, I can’t talk about politics or art or education or sports. That’s not what its saying. The word **“worldly”** here is not *sarx*, it’s not *kosmos*, it’s *bebelos*. **“Avoid *bebelos*.”** Which means, don’t discuss art, music, education, sports, politics, don’t discuss anything as if it has no relationship to God. You can talk about politics but it's sin to talk about politics without respect to God. We are to talk in a sanctified manner about all things. Also he goes on; **“avoid...empty chatter,”** *kenos*, that means things that are just a waste of time, vain things. Don’t waste your time on that kind of discussion, leave, whether people think it's disrespectful or not, leave. That is an order from High Command. Why, he continues, **“for it will lead to further ungodliness,”** it’s already ungodly, it’s sin, but if you don’t avoid this **it will lead to further ungodliness,** *asebeia*, the reverse of a word we’ll see later *eusebeia*, ungodliness vs godliness. **“and their talk will spread like**

gangrene.” This is a bacterial infection out of control. They call that a super-infection and if you get a super-infection you’re in bad shape and you usually have to be hospitalized and on mega-doses of antibiotic to turn that thing around. So we’re talking about ungodliness spreading like a super-infection. It will just eat you alive. Verse 17, we’re still interested in the apostasy.

“**Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some.**” So what had this unsterilized discussion of ideas resulted in? Straying from the truth, the truth, the content of Christian doctrine. And acceptance of what? False doctrine. Here a false doctrine of **resurrection**. They believed in the **resurrection**, they just believed it had already past, it was over, and you missed it. Think that might upset some people?

From those verses 1:15; 2:16-18 did Paul think the apostasy had begun? What did Paul think the apostasy was? Defection from the truth. Had a defection begun? Yes, they’d swerved away from the word of God. Here in v 16 it can all be traced back to having unsanctified discussion, not bringing the word of God to bear on every topic you discuss. It’s very dangerous, Paul says, to do that. So yes, the apostasy had begun. It was a defection from the truth and people were defecting in the 1st century. Now turn to chapter 3, we want to look at the trend of the apostasy. If apostasy is departure from true doctrine and Paul was already seeing it, then what’s the trend across the church age? How will it progress? Verse 1, “But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come.” Think what that verse means for a pastor? This is a pastoral epistle, this was written to pastor Timothy. You think it’s going to be easy? Look at what we’re facing. Just scan the verses: verse 2, verse 3, verse 4, verse 5, look at verse 5, **having the form of godliness**. Is that all around us? It looks godly, therefore it must be godly, uh, uh, uh, wrong conclusion! He goes on, verse 6, verse 7, that whole pile of things is what the pastor is up against. Verse 7 is an interesting one because that’s the result of verses 2-6, all that mess, that stuff of the world system scars people such that they don’t even have the ability to come to **knowledge of the truth**. And “knowledge” by the way here, is *epignosis*; two words, *gnosis* which means “knowledge, but here it’s prefixed by *epi-* and when the Greek language does that, in many cases it’s to intensify. That’s what it’s doing here; it’s an intense knowledge, a full knowledge of the truth. Are we talking about believers or unbelievers who’ve departed from the truth? Believers.

Full knowledge is reserved for believers. But these believers have so scarred themselves it's impossible for them to come to full knowledge of the truth. Did you know you could do that? You can get so messed up spiritually that while you're saved you can't come to *epignosis*? Paul prays elsewhere for all believers to come to *epignosis* but all don't. What he's talking about is a mature knowledge, this is advanced thought. See, there's a difference between just coming into the Christian life and dilly-dallying around, quoting a few verses here and there in your life and a mature believer who knows the word of God, who knows the mind of God because he's studied for so long and so hard that He knows the plan of God. If you were to sit down and talk to these people they are able to talk their whole way through the Bible without a Bible, it's all up here, and they are able to explain how this connects to this over here, and Rom 5 that goes back to Gen 3 and Matt 1 that links back with 2 Sam 7 and Ps 89 and this truth is related to that truth in this way. That's *epignosis*; where a person has interconnected God's truth into a total system of life and thought. It's not knowing Bible verses. The Pharisees knew Bible verses, for crying out loud, they memorized the whole Torah! Learning scripture verses is fine but not if you don't put them together. Because if you notice verse 7, learning is something different than knowledge in Scripture. Trivial Pursuit is what I call learning. I've always thought the name of that game was so *apropos* because it's saying something very profound. Think about it, "Trivial Pursuit." It was made for people who pursue trivial things, that is mere acquisition of facts apart from the meaning of facts. Think of the game, by the way, we as Christians would not say they were trivial, we believe all things have their place in the plan of God, but the name itself is talking about what this verse is talking about when it says "**learning**." Learning is acquiring facts apart from the interpretation or meaning of the facts. And Christians can do that. It's gathering bits of information but failing to see relationships between the bits of information. You are just learning pieces, it doesn't mean anything. It's like acquiring puzzle pieces but you have no idea how they go together to form a picture. What use is that? Some people think politics is the unifying factor or military is the unifying factor and they try to put the facts together around that factor to explain history. It doesn't work. Why doesn't it work? Because it starts totally independent of the word of God. God set up history so you can't figure it out unless you come to His revelation. History is not driven by economic or political or military factors, those are involved but they're not the drive train. The drive train of history is the word of God in His covenants. When was the

last time you heard that analysis on CNN. The word of God controls what happened in Afghanistan today. **Always learning but never coming to epignosis of the truth.** The “truth” being reality as described by the word of God. If you will pay attention to the word of God you’ll find that the word of God is describing reality as it is. And then you will see that everyone else, the way they’re looking at the world doesn’t fit reality. So what Paul is saying in vv 2-7 is that believers can get themselves so enveloped in the world system that they destroy their ability to connect all the pieces into a unified view of history under God’s authority. It’s like they’re jammed in the Christian life and they can never get unjammed.

All right, skip down to verse 13. What's the trend of the apostasy? “But evil men and impostors will proceed *from bad* to worse, deceiving and being deceived.” So what’s the trend? If the apostasy was going on in Paul’s day is it going to get better or worse? Worse. There’s a downward trend.

So let’s come back now to the contrast. If vv 1-9 describe the apostasy, those who hate God, a trend which worsens and worsens as the Church ages, then v 10 gives the contrast, “**Now you followed my teaching,**” but the conjunction *de* at the beginning is a contrast, it should read, “**But you,**” whose the you? Timothy. “**But you [Timothy] followed my doctrine,**” the word for doctrine, *didaskalia*. There’s another word for doctrine, *didache*, and it can refer to the act of teaching or the content of teaching. The context determines and I think here we’re talking about the “content.” What Paul taught; his doctrine. Timothy followed that. So what’s going on? What had been going on? Here’s Paul, here’s Timothy, Paul teaches, Timothy follows, Paul teaches some more, Timothy follows. What’s going on here? Mentoring. One man Paul is mentoring another man, Timothy. Timothy at this time was about 35 years of age, he’d been with Paul about 15 years now, he followed him everywhere he went and he followed Paul’s doctrine. He’d learned Paul’s system, which is the Holy Spirit’s system. How important is this mentoring bit? Before I came here I had two friends. We went to the same church, we were taking a few seminary classes and one of our group went to the pastor and asked him, “Will you mentor us, the three of us? We want to learn the word of God.” Do you know what the answer was? “No.” “But we want to learn the word of God. Sorry. No can do.” That had a profound effect on me. From that day I vowed if anyone ever asked me in all sobriety if I would mentor them I would do it. Men, we are called to pass on the truth to other

faithful men who will teach others also. I am not the sole source of bread here. Who are you passing these truths on to? Who's your student?

All right, what else did Timothy follow? Verse 10, my “**conduct**,” that's his way of life, his way of living. You saw how my life conformed to the doctrine. Third, my “**purpose**,” has to do with God's will for Paul's life, which was to minister to Jews and Gentiles and that purpose is revealed in Rom 9 for Paul's life. Fourth, my “**faith**,” Greek *pistis*, my firm reliance on the truth. Timothy followed that, he observed how Paul lived by faith, not relying on the flesh but being convinced of the word of God, he trusted the word of God. Fifth, my “**patience**,” *makrothumia*, (two words *makro* meaning large, *thumia*, meaning heat, large heat). Paul could withstand a lot of heat. Put in our terms, he had a long fuse with people. Sixth, my “**love**,” you followed my *agape*, my respect type of love for other people. Paul respected the image of God in man. Seventh, my “**perseverance**,” *hupomone* which means to bear up under something. If you've ever had to carry a heavy load on your back you get the parallel in the spiritual realm, you face trials and tribulations and through all that Paul was patient, he didn't fly off the handle, he could relax and push through. Verse 11, “**persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me!**” We've studied that in the Book of Acts, Paul's first missionary expedition, he was dragged out of town and stoned at Lystra, and there were other sufferings and persecutions Paul faced for the sake of the word of God on that journey. Timothy was from this region so he saw all Paul faced. He saw the brutal and continual treatment at the hands of the enemies of the word of God.

These nine things Timothy followed, Paul's life was an open book and from following closely Paul's ministry Timothy had become a man who loved God, who loved the word of God. Paul was his example. *The principle is that a man of God will influence men who will become men of God.* This is a process that will naturally happen. Let me repeat it. *A man of God will influence men who will become men of God.* So two questions arise, one historical and one present. The historical question is what man of God had this kind of influence on your life? Think back. Maybe it's happening right now as you watch and follow a man of God. The second question, for the present is, “If you are a man of God what men are you influencing to become men of God?” If you are

a woman, an older woman, what younger woman are you teaching to love their husband and so forth? How are you influencing young ladies in the biblical framework of womanhood because I guarantee you they don't have a clue what it looks like. We've got to get a biblical vision again for biblical womanhood. It's a mess. These are ministries I'm not called to. I am not here to do ministry for you; I am called to minister to you, to train you in how to minister to others. But if the ministry the Lord has given me toward you is not duplicated in you to others then the ministry stops, it's a dead end. So I challenge you to follow me. Follow me as Timothy followed Paul. Follow me in my doctrine, my way of life, my purpose to teach the whole counsel of God, my faith, firm reliance on God, my patience with people, my respect type of love for you. That is the challenge; are you willing to follow and are you willing to become ministers to others also? This is how truth propagates.

All right, verse 12, and this is a hard one, **“Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”** I want to look at two words here: **“desire,”** that word doesn't mean try to, that word means **“purpose,”** - is it your purpose in life to live godly in Christ Jesus? What is the purpose of your life? To **“live godly”** is *eusebeia*. Remember earlier we had the men chattering about everything disconnected from God, as if God had nothing to do with it. Paul said that leads to further *asebeia*, ungodliness, the reverse of that is here, *eusebeia*, a person who has respect for the God of revelation, a person who thinks God's thoughts after Him in every area of life. That is what is offensive to people. When you stop being religious about Christianity and keeping it all over here in a corner of your experience, once you let it out into every area of life and apply Christianity to every area of life, whether it be math, science, art, music, politics, when you do that and you challenge the way your profession does something, now you're offensive because now you're saying God is Lord over all; He's master and you are not free to think about those areas and act in those areas independently of Him, that's *eusebeia*, living godly.

Asebeia is living as if God is dead, as if God has nothing to say about those areas of life. People don't care if you have your own private religious experience, that doesn't bother people. What bothers people is when you insist that the word of God is objectively true whether people believe it or not. That is why, and we have to come to grips with v 12, but that is why Paul says, **“all who purpose to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”** When was the last time you were persecuted? I've often

thought of this. Timothy saw the literal scars on Paul's body. Paul was stoned under a heap of stones to a bloody pulp, he was run out of town on a rail, and he was beaten on numerous occasions. What scars do we have? The battle is heating up. Maybe some of us are going to have some. In every period of church history from the apostles like Peter, to the great men of God at the Reformation like William Tyndale, men bore the marks of Jesus Christ in their flesh. Why? Because they **purposed to live godly**. What does that say about those who aren't persecuted? They didn't **purpose to live godly**, they purposed to live unto self.

Verse 13, "**But evil men and impostors**", put-ons, people who fake godliness "**will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.**" The apostasy goes from bad to worse. The question is how will you handle it? If there are going to be more and more evil men and fakers then are you going to compromise truth to try to reach them? That's one of the great deceptions out there that you can compromise truth and win people to the truth. If you compromise the truth they've won you to the lie. People like to play that game and introduce all kinds of foreign elements to the Church to try to get people interested. What are we supposed to be doing? Chapter 4 answers that. But they want to introduce all kinds of things. We got to draw people in. Of course they baptize the foreign elements into Christianity. All it is is secular gimmicks dressed up in Christian words. Does that make it Christian? What does chapter 4:2 say the pastor is supposed to do? **Preach the word!** An imperatival command. Not all this other stuff; **preach the word!** This is an order. Do you know how you can tell if a pastor is following this or not? How much time does he spend preaching the word of God? If you have to go in and sit down and listen to 45 minutes of music where you sing 7-11 choruses, seven words eleven times, mantra's under the guise of Christianity, and 25 minutes of announcements and 10 minutes of the word of God where the pastor reads one verse and then leaps off into his agenda, has this command been followed? What a travesty. By the way, what has happened when a pastor uses the word of God as a springboard for his agenda? What has a pastor just stated when he did that? My agenda is more important than God's agenda; what I have to say is more important than what God has to say?

Back to verse 14, here's how you're to handle the apostasy that will go from bad to worse. Here's how Paul instructed Timothy to face it, "**You, however,**

continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them,” The word there “**continue**” is the Greek *meno*, which means to stay at home in the word of God. Don’t buy into all this garbage, the gimmicks which lessen, minimize and distort the word of God, till eventually they are denied. Stay at home in the things you have learned Timothy, don’t defect from them, stay with it, knowing from whom you have **learned them**. From whom had he learned them? Obviously from Paul, but who else? Who’s being brought in at vv 14-15? His mother, Eunice and his grandmother, Lois, both believers, both trained him. So he reminds him of his heritage, reflect back Timothy on your biblical heritage. And with this we’re introducing an important passage, we read it every Sunday, we want to go into it.

Vs 14-15 state Timothy’s biblical heritage. Verse 15, “**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.**” Let’s start with the word “**childhood**,” it’s the word *brephos*, and that word parents means “a fetus, an unborn child” or “a toddler.” It’s possible this looks back even to the period when Timothy was still unborn, we don’t know how they did it. Did they sing Psalms while he was still in the womb? Did they talk to him in the womb? But look at this, from as early as the womb Timothy, the sacred writings are your heritage. Are we training our children starting in the womb, or at least from birth? From *brephos*? You can make a pretty good argument that Moses’ parents trained him for the three years they had him until they had to take him to the queen at Pharaoh’s palace. And that training paid off because when it came to being identified as Egyptian royalty or with Hebrew slaves, Moses chose the latter. And I’m convinced those first three years are crucial, absolutely crucial in child training. What had Timothy known from his child training? The “sacred writings,” *iera grammata*. The transcendent writings, the word of God. Now what word of God is Paul referring to here that Timothy knew; the OT, the NT or both? Let’s think. Timothy was about 35 years old when this was written and this was written about AD65, so Timothy was a *brephos* in AD30, this is an historical statement looking back to AD30. What sacred writings were available in AD30? The OT. Now another question, “What version of the OT did Timothy have? Did he have the original autographa?” No, he had copies of copies of copies of copies. Yet what does Paul call the copies? The **sacred writings**. What version of the Bible did he have? He probably had

the LXX, the Greek translation, not even a Hebrew text, so a copy of a translation, yet still called **sacred writings**, not an original. It's very interesting Paul says this because what do you have in your hands; you have a translation, "Is it the holy scriptures?" You bet it is. Is it able to do what Paul said Timothy's OT could do? Lead to salvation? You bet it can. I guarantee no one of you had to go back into the Hebrew and Greek to get saved. Is the Hebrew and Greek important? Yes, but what we have in our translated copy is sufficient to lead to salvation. So Timothy had a rich biblical heritage. He had the influence of a godly mother, a godly grandmother, then Paul. Quite a heritage. What's your heritage? Do you have a stream of godly influences? Not everyone has this. Some of you are first generation believers. But do you have a godly mentor? A godly pastor? A godly teacher? Let them be an encouragement to you. There were those who came before you that stayed true to the word of God and helped you along in it.

Let's come to verse 16, the clearest verse on the inspiration of Scripture in the whole Bible, "**All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;** ¹⁷**so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.**" Let's break that down because this is the ultimate weapon against apostasy. You've heard of the ultimate weapon of warfare, the nuclear bomb, that ends things, that finishes things. Well, the nuclear bomb against the cancer of apostasy is the word of God. So let's look at it. **All Scripture is inspired by God**, *pasa graphe theopneustos*. "**All**," *pasa*, meaning "full" "total" "plenary". You've heard of a plenary congress, which means the full congress, every member is present, and this is where we get the idea of plenary inspiration. That all of it, extending to every portion is inspired. "**Scripture**," *graphe*, the writings, what is written, the enscripted word of God. This is verbal, the words. This is where we get the idea of "verbal inspiration." All the enscripted word of God is *theopneustos*, a compound word made up of *theos*- God and *pneustos*, air, the lungs; we say you get pneumonia, that's a problem with breathing. **God-breathed** or the breath of God. We use inspiration which means to breathe in but better expiration, to breathe out, the out breath of God. That's what we're handling, the very breath of God. I hope you appreciate what it is we have in Scripture. Now, think, to what does the noun **Scripture** refer here? In v 15 the **sacred writings** referred to the OT, because it refers back to AD30, when Timothy

was a *brephos*, but verse 16 is written in AD65, so have the *graphe* expanded by this time? What NT books do we have? James, that's the earliest, probably AD44, Galatians AD49, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Romans, Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, Philippians, 1 Timothy, Titus. All Scripture including these writings is the expiration of God. Most of those are Pauline writings. To see another verse that relates to this turn over to 2 Peter 3:16. 1 Peter had also been written and probably 2 Peter and here's Peter commenting on some of Paul's writings, very interesting what he says about them. Verse 15, "**Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, ¹⁶as also in all *his* letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.**" How does Peter categorize Paul's writings? Right in along with the rest of Scripture. Did they know they were writing Scripture? Apparently so. They were recognized during their own lifetime as divinely inspired. Sometimes you hear the canon wasn't determined until 325AD by Constantine. What do you do with this? Did they recognize Paul's letters as having authority? As being God's word? Sure they did. Were they distorting them? Yes. Were they in the apostasy? All right, let's go back to 2 Tim 3:16. What is the word of God **profitable** for? Four things, "**doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness, that the man of God,**" all right, we're back to the man of God again, in opposition to the fakers, the apostates. **That the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.** Four things in v 16b: **doctrine**, that's the subject matter here, the content, what to believe, "**reproof**," that's a word that comes from the word for "expose with light," it cast light on something as wrong or right, the word of God does that; "**correction**," the word of God brings you back to the right path, and **instruction**, the word *paideia*, a word for training, training a child, growing up a child, from this word we get the idea of pedagogy. The word of God is a divine pedagogy or training device. It trains us in "righteousness," the standard for all thought and life.

The purpose is in v 17: *hina* clause, "**that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work,**" How can a man be a man of God without the word of God? It's impossible! "**adequate**," from *artios*, having reached a place where the man is proficient, capable, **equipped**, a perfect passive participle, difficult to translate, difficult to see the relationship in this verse. Translated a number of ways, the participle is

exartizo, the prepositional prefix often intensifies as here, having been intensively equipped, intensively trained, toward or for every good work. The Phillips translation says, “The scriptures are the comprehensive equipment of the man of God...” Are you being intensively equipped by following a godly heritage, by following godly parents, a mentor, a pastor, a teacher who heralds the word of God? In this context it is being equipped by the word of God that combats against apostasy. Do you know this and live this and love this? We’re a Bible church for crying out loud, we have Bible in our name. This isn’t so and so Community Church. What is that a commune or something? Let’s all just get together? What is going on out there? I’ll tell you what’s going on; Paul said it will go from bad in his day to worse. Well, it’s worse. Can Christians today explain what the resurrection is, why we believe it, where it’s found in God’s word, when it happened in history? Can we explain who Jesus Christ is, why He came, what He did, why He did it, what it accomplished? It’s significance in history? Are we comprehensively equipped by the word of God for every good work? I don’t think so. Can you? I hope so.

All right, chapter 4, the center of the book, that’s all just a work up for this charge. Scan down to verse 6 because there you see Paul’s in his last days, he predicts, as did Peter that he doesn’t have much time left, these are his parting words. You don’t waste words when you’re about to die. You say what’s important. What does Paul think is important? “**I solemnly charge you**” *diamarturomai*, I warn you, this is a word of peril. “**I warn you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, kai**, epexegetical, both or even, here both, “**who is to judge the living and the dead both by His appearing and His kingdom:**” warning of two judgments, **His appearing** where all in the Church are raptured and taken to the judgment seat of Christ, “**and His kingdom,**” when he returns to earth to judge Israel and the Tribulation saints. I warn you with respect to those two events, **HERALD THE WORD!** Friends, this is serious. The word of God is not a plaything, you should not play with it, you should not let other people play with it. I, of all people, should not play with it, it’s the very breath of God. It is to be proclaimed. Not your word, not your agenda, not my word, not my agenda, God’s word, God’s agenda. It is the weapon against apostasy.

How important is it for men of God to preach the word? Men of God are absolutely critical in standing against the apostasy. Now contrast that with what is going on in churches today. Are men of God preaching the word of God? Or are they preaching psychology? Are they preaching sociology? This is a charge from the mind of God, a perilous charge. How will the age end? In greater and greater apostasy. So here we're refining a little bit our understanding of apostasy. So less and less preaching of the word of God and more and more minimizing the word of God, more and more distorting of the word of God, more and more denial of the word of God. The apostasy is inversely proportional to the preaching of the word of God. So less and less preaching of the word of God, more and more apostasy. Turn to 1 Tim 5:17 briefly. Sometimes people get the idea being a pastor and teacher is some kind of thing you just stand up there and the Spirit lays it on you, boom and the word of God flashes forth or something, some passive procedure of God through your mouth. I want to show you something in the text. 1 Tim 5:17, Paul to the elders, **¹⁷The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor,** that means some kind of remuneration, some kind of compensation, **“especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.”** You see the words **“work hard”** that means “labor to exhaustion.” To the point you're completely worn out.” Have you ever had a day where you worked and you worked and you worked and then you just about keeled over? That's what this is talking about. If a pastor is doing his job then he ought to be mentally wasted by the end of the day, absolutely wiped out. And I guarantee you, you can ask my wife, there's hardly a day that goes by that after 9-5, go home, spend three and a half hours with my wife and kids and then read from 9-11:30. There's just so much that I've got to get done to put these lessons together. Got to read this book and that book, work on this chronology, read that article, all the little technical papers published in the journals. Day in-day out, to the point of mental exhaustion. That's what a pastor is supposed to be doing, SUPPOSED to be doing. Why? Because he's handling the very word of God. It is not a thing to play with. Just once consider having to get up and explain to people the word of God. How would you like that? I'm not complaining here, I've complained before. I'm not complaining because I learned that's what I'm supposed to do, labor over the word of God to preach the word of God. For the Scripture says, verse 18, **“YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING,”** and **“The laborer is worthy of his wages.”** Quotes from the OT and Luke and Matthew by the way, including them in the “all Scripture.”

All right, back to 1 Tim 4, there are other imperatives here and, by the way, there are nine imperatives in vv 2 and 5, all aorist imperatives. The aorist is indicating the kind of action, not so much the timing of the action, the kind of action here is urgent aorist. Urgently **herald the word**, urgently **“be ready,”** that word means “stand up,” stand up for the word of God, don’t be afraid **“both in season and out of season,”** there are different seasons, some are easier and some are harder. We live out of season, these are hard times, we have to stand up and fight. You’re going to have to fight for the truth, to get people to listen to the truth in the apostasy, they don’t want to hear the truth, and I’m getting ahead of myself, that’s vv 3-4, right. But there’s a war on between those who hold to the precious word of God and those in the apostasy, the sub-mergent church, the Roman Catholic Church, Mormonism, JW’s, all apostasy. What else? More urgent imperatives, **“reprove,”** that is, bring to light, show the error, **“rebuke,”** confront and chide those in opposition, **“exhort,”** *parakaleo*, call people alongside you in the battle for truth. How, how is it to be done, **with all patience**, having a long fuse, and *didache*, **teaching**. Have a long fuse with people and keep teaching.

Verse 3, **“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, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.”** This is a prophecy from the mouth of Paul. See the word, **“they will not endure,”** endure is a word of tolerate. They will not tolerate **“sound doctrine,”** the word **“sound”** means “correct, accurate,” they will not tolerate correct **doctrine**. I was just in the parking lot yesterday and a couple from our church were telling me they were up in Lubbock and they had heard great things about a church - how many people were going to it, how it was growing and all that. So they went and they sang five songs, had 25 minutes of birthday announcements, 25 minutes, that shows you how many people go the church, then the guy gets up there and one of the first things out of his mouth, “We don’t get into doctrine around here.” What did Paul predict? **“they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled,** hear some new interesting thing, **“they will accumulate,** that’s a word for storing up, they will store up for themselves **teachers in accordance with their own lusts, “and will turn away**

their ears from the truth.” Notice not truth but **the truth**, articular. In context, the truth of the enscripted word of God, 2 Tim 3:16, they will turn away from the enscripted word of God, the truth. Truth circles are narrowing folks, that’s the apostasy declared in Scripture, a trend from bad to worse starting in Paul’s day and circles of truth getting smaller and smaller and smaller.

Let me finish with a charge: In the apostasy the enscripted word of God will be the focus of the attack. Teachers of the word of God will be tempted to use gimmicks, psychology, and superficial entertainment to attract people. Paul reminds Timothy and us that it is the word of God which is the comprehensive equipment of the man of God to accomplish the will of God. We are going to have to fight for the truth in our day.

[Back To The Top](#)

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