

Intro: Our clearest perspective as to what matters in this life will come on our deathbed. After a lifetime of reflection, Paul tells us what the most important things in life really are (cf. Prov. 10:19, KJV).

The Context: the moral debauchery of society is beginning to permeate the church. In ch. 3 Paul warned of the ‘grievous seasons’ of departure from the faith. Though in a sense these seasons are certainly future, they are directly linked to the present situation in Ephesus. The very fact that Paul admonishes Timothy to fulfill his ministry, reproving & rebuking whenever necessary, & remaining sober in the midst of all untoward circumstances, shows that future heresy is viewed as the outworking of present error. The coming apostasy is a further stage in the development of the already present deviation from the truth.

Though the background of chapters 3 & 4 is the same, we yet see a difference of *approach*. Ch. 3 stresses the fact that Timothy, confronted w/ developing opposition to the truth, must *abide* in the true doctrine. Ch. 4 brings into prominence Timothy’s duty to *proclaim* this doctrine.

1. Scripture Must Play a Central Role in Ministry (1-4)

A. The Seriousness of the Charge/Warning (1)

- Court language. Paul is not alone when he solemnly charges Timothy, nor is Timothy alone in ministry (Pro. 15:3). Timothy is ‘under oath’
- No other “judgment” matters. Who cares what men think?
- “About to judge” – even now His coming footsteps can be heard
- The idea that Christ is coming to judge is a frequent theme in Paul

B. The Content of the Charge (2)

- i. Preach the Word – B/c there is nothing more important in this life than the salvation of souls, Paul’s last charge is that Timothy preach that *logos* (cf. 3:15-17). This is basic to the other 4 imperatives
 - “To herald” was to make known officially & publicly a matter of great significance. A herald, by order of his Superior, was to make an authoritative, open, forceful declaration.
 - The herald thus openly declares *God’s* message (not a sermon)
 - “The Word” in the PE is equivalent to the gospel’, cf. 3:15-17
 - How this heralding is to be done is indicated by the 4 aorists:

- ii. Be Prepared in season & out of season, whether convenient or not
- iii. Reprove/Correct – part of preaching the Word is dealing w/ errors in doctrine & practice (before they sprout & grow)
- iv. Rebuke – those who do not listen to bring restoration thru repentance
- v. Exhort – to a life of righteousness those who do heed the Word

Sometimes what is *not* said says more than what is. What are some things Paul does not charge Timothy to do?

C. The Reason for the Charge (3-4)

- In every period of history there will be a season during which men refuse to listen to sound doctrine.
- Jer. 5:31 – “The prophets prophecy falsely...and My people love it so”
- “You are very entertaining to them, like someone who sings love songs with a beautiful voice or plays fine music on an instrument. They hear what you say, but they don't act on it!” (Eze. 33:32).
- As history continues onward toward the consummation, this situation will grow worse. Such heaping up of teachers justifies their ‘lusts’.
- “Because they have an insatiable curiosity to hear new things.” (NET)
- B/c the truth confronts their sinfulness, they will turn from it & wander off into ear-tickling myths.
- This again stresses that a person’s doctrine cannot be separated from behavior; b/c their actions are controlled by their lusts, the teaching is wrong.

2. Faithfulness to Gospel Proclamation Brings More Pain, Not Less (5)

- Again, a sharp contrast given for the man of God in a wicked world
- A major theme in the PE, esp. 2 Timothy (cf. 1:8, 12; 2:3; 3:12)
- Not surprising considering the world T lives in (3:1-5; 4:3-4)
 - i. The Need for Self-Control
 - ii. The Need to Endure Suffering
 - iii. The Need for Evangelism
 - iv. The Need for Perseverance

3. Paul’s View of Life & Death is Instructive (6-8)

A. What Death is for the Believer (6)

- “Loosing” an analogy of sailors offering a libation before sailing off on a great journey; here, the libation has been offered – Paul’s life – and his ship is now setting sail for heaven.

B. What Life is for the Believer (7)

- A battle & a marathon
- Cf. 4:1; Php. 1:21

C. What Reward Awaits the Believer (8)

- The reward trumps the cost (cf. Php. 1:20)
- Spending your life for the gospel is a ‘good investment’

Conclusion: this is the charge I want our church to follow this next year (review).