

Essential Commitments of a Local Church

Pt. 4

2 Timothy 4:1–5

2 Timothy 4:1–5 (NKJV)

4 I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: ² Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. ³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; ⁴ and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. ⁵ But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Introduction:

Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899– 1981), who was minister of Westminster Chapel in London for almost thirty years, was invited to come and give his lectures on preaching at Westminster Theological Seminary in 1969, he gave two reasons why he was willing to come and speak,

“My reason for being very ready to give these lectures is that to me the work of preaching is the highest and the greatest and the most glorious calling to which anyone can ever be called. If you want something in addition to that, I would say without any hesitation that the most urgent need in the Christian Church today is true preaching; and as it is the great and most urgent need in the Church, it is obviously the great need of the world also.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1971)
Piper, John. *Expository Exultation* (p. 22). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

He knew that the Bible is true and exists for the glory of God. Therefore, reading it and preaching it share that goal.

J. I. Packer said

that Lloyd-Jones's preaching came to him with the force of electric shock and brought him "more of a sense of God than any other man."

Piper, John. Expository Exultation (p. 13, 14). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

Luther did not view Christ's presence in the Eucharist as consisting somehow in a transformation of the substance of the elements. Rather, Luther saw the presence of Christ as consisting "in, with, and under" the elements of bread and wine.

In a similar fashion, Luther affirmed the presence of Christ in the preaching of the Word. Again, Christ is truly present. Thus Luther had an additional doctrine of the 'real presence' — namely, "the real presence of Christ in proclamation...." This means, according to **Fred W. Meuser**, "In the sermon one actually encounters God."³

³Fred W. Meuser, *Luther the Preacher* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1983), 13.

The Word "preached", for Luther, remains the one indispensable thing.

Roland Bainton has summed it up well:

"The Reformation gave centrality to the sermon. The pulpit was higher than the altar, for Luther held that salvation is through the Word and without the Word the

elements are devoid of sacramental quality, but the Word is sterile unless it is spoken.”⁵

⁵Roland Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (1950; reprint, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1978), 272.

Luther gloried in exalting the power of the Word, in particular the power of God in the preached Word. Luther argues that one thing, and only one thing, is necessary for the believer to live a righteous life, the Word of God.

“Let us then consider it certain and firmly established that the soul can do without anything except the Word of God and that where the Word of God is missing there is no help at all for the soul. If it has the Word of God it is rich and lacks nothing since it is the Word of life, truth, light, peace, righteousness, salvation, joy, liberty, wisdom, power, grace, glory, and of every incalculable blessing....

On the other hand, there is no more terrible disaster with which the wrath of God can afflict men than a famine of the hearing of his Word, as he says in Amos [8:11].⁶

Luther continues:

“To preach Christ means to feed the soul, make it righteous, set it free, and save it, provided it believes the preaching.”⁷

God works his grace through his Word, particularly the preached Word. For the written Word “is not as fruitful

and powerful as it is through a public preacher whom God has ordained to say and preach this.”⁹

⁹Quoted from Eric W. Gritsch, *Martin—God’s Court Jester* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 108. Sermon of 21 July 1532, Jaroslav Pelikan, “Luther the Expositor,” *Luther’s Works, Companion Volume* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), 64n. 66.

Summing up Luther’s view:

“Christian preaching—when it is faithful to the word of God in the Scriptures about our need and God’s response to it—is God speaking.... It is God’s very own audible address to all who hear it, just as surely as if Christ himself had spoken it.”¹⁹ For this reason, both the labor of the preacher and the receiving of the sermon by the listener makes preaching “saving business” and “dangerous business.”²⁰

¹⁹Meuser, *Luther the Preacher*, 12.

²⁰As Meuser states, *Luther the Preacher*, p. 13: “That makes preaching—and hearing—a most dangerous business.

Luther is fully cognizant that preachers may fail to preach God’s Word. If that is the case the verdict is swift and direct. “For whatever departs from the word of God (which is the only way, as Christ says, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life’ [John 14:6]), however well and beautifully it may glitter, is without question error, lie, and death. It is without the word of God, that is, without the way, the truth, and the life. And what need would we have of the word if we could find ways for ourselves without it? ”²²

²²Against Hanswurst [1541], LW, vol. 41, 215.

Preachers must be servants of the Word for Jesus' sake. Their role is one of subservience to Christ.

“Whoever, therefore, does not know or preach the gospel is not only no priest or bishop, but he is a kind of pest to the church, who under the false title of priest or bishop, or dressed in sheep’s clothing, actually does violence to the gospel and plays the wolf [Matt. 7:15] in the church.”²³ On the other hand when God’s Word is faithfully proclaimed, all are under necessity to hear it, heed it, and be healed by it. Nobody is a believer apart from the Word—that is, apart from God’s speaking, apart from the Word God Himself speaks.

23The Babylonian Captivity of the Church [1520], LW, vol. 36, 116.

Like Luther, Calvin had a doctrine of the real or true presence of Christ in the sacrament. But whereas Luther’s conception depended upon a doctrine of ubiquity, Calvin appealed to the “spiritual” presence of Christ in the Eucharist. He would have nothing to do with a “fictitious transubstantiation,” but neither would he allow believers to reduce the Supper to a “memorial.” For Calvin, believers actually partake of Christ in the sacrament. “Our souls are fed by the flesh and blood of Christ in the same way that bread and wine keep and sustain physical life.”³⁵

35John Calvin, Institutes 4.17.10. All references to Calvin’s Institutes are from the translation by Ford Lewis Battles. Institutes of the Christian Religion, 2 vols., ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960). All references to Calvin’s Old Testament commentaries are from the Calvin Translation Society edition, reprinted by Baker Book House Company; Calvin’s Commentaries, vols. 1-15 (Reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979). All references to Calvin’s New Testament commentaries are from the edition edited by David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance; Calvin’s New Testament Commentaries, 12 vols., edited by David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1959-1972). References to Calvin’s sermons and treatises will be indicated individually.

What this means is that Calvin adhered to a strict doctrine of the real presence; he was not suggesting that Christ is present only in our imagination or that Christ is present in the way the Spirit is always present with the believer.

According to John H. Leith, “Calvin thought of preaching as the primary means by which God’s presence becomes actual to us and by which God’s work is accomplished in individual life and in the community.”³⁹

Leith quotes Stauffer,⁴⁰ who

“suggests that preaching for Calvin was not only a moment of worship, not only a task of the church, but also something of a divine epiphany. ‘When the Gospel is preached in the name of God, it is as if God himself spoke in person [Third Sermon on Jacob &

Esau].’”⁴¹

Ronald S. Wallace offers a similar description of Calvin’s view:

“Usually when he [God] had a word to speak He spoke it through the medium of a prophet, whose speech, however, in the act of speaking, God so

closely identified with His own Word that it may be said that the mouth of the prophet

39John H. Leith, "Calvin's Doctrine of the Proclamation of the Word and Its Significance for Today in the Light of Recent Research," *Review and Expositor*, 86 (Winter 1989): 29.

40Richard Stauffer, "Les discours à la première personne dans les sermons de Calvin," in *Regards contemporains sur Jean Calvin* (Paris, 1965).

41Leith, "Calvin's Doctrine of the Proclamation of the Word and Its Significance for Today in the Light of Recent Research," *Review and Expositor*, 86 (Winter 1989): 31.

Calvin conceives of the preaching of the gospel as a means of grace because it is the path along which God is pleased to operate in order to save sinners. God effects regeneration and sanctification by means of the Word preached. Christ himself is communicated to those whom the Spirit works an inward grace through the outward word—hence the sacramental character of preaching. Faith is wrought in sinners for their justification and renewal, for "faith arises from the Word of God."¹⁰⁶

It is particularly through the preaching of the Word that God bestows the gift of faith upon those whom he has chosen for eternal life. Thus Calvin is bold to say, "take away the preaching of the Gospel, and no faith will remain."¹⁰⁷

This means that "faith is born of hearing, because the outward preaching by men is the instrument by which God draws us to faith. Hence it follows that God is, strictly speaking, the Author of faith and men are the ministers by whom we believe...."¹⁰⁸

Faith is therefore linked with preaching and teaching. In fact, Calvin conceives of the relation

between preaching and faith as like that between a mother and birth, “for the preaching is the mother who conceives and brings forth, and faith is the daughter who ought to be mindful of her origin.”¹⁰⁹

Such is the connection between the people’s faith and the minister’s preaching.

105Institutes 3.1.1. 106Comm. on Rom. 10:13.

We offer the following summary statements regarding Calvin’s conception of the presence of Christ in the preaching of the gospel:

- 1** In the preaching of the gospel the sheep hear the Good Shepherd’s voice, not merely the voice of the pastor.
- 2** God is pleased to accommodate himself to our human frailty and therefore he makes use of human instrumentality to declare his Word.
- 3** The sermon is a divine-human work in that the instrument or messenger is human, the Word or message imparted is divine.
- 4** Preaching of the Word must faithfully exposit and apply the Scriptures; in doing so it bears a derivative authority, but in just that way it also bears an immediate authority in our hearing of it.
- 5** Christ is spiritually present in the preaching of the gospel through the operation of the Holy Spirit; hence

preaching possesses a sacramental character—an outward vehicle for an inward grace.

6 Preaching serves to impart an understanding of Scripture, and therefore it must be preached in a manner adapted to and profitable for those who hear it.

7 Preaching occupies a place of importance above private or public Bible reading.

8 Preaching that is not faithful to Scripture is not preaching.

9 The Holy Spirit is the internal minister of the Word who makes effectual the outward ministry of the Word, and who communicates Christ to us in a way that is mystical, incomprehensible, and spiritual.

10 The preaching of the Word is the chief means of grace for producing faith in God's people and nurturing them in the way of faith.

11 The proper function of the preaching of the Word is to heal and to bless unto the salvation of sinners.

12 Believers can know the absolution of their sin in the preaching of the gospel; the sermon is therefore a source of assurance since Christ himself speaks to us

concerning our forgiveness and reconciliation through his blood.

13 Believers may not despise the human instrument God employs to impart his Word to us; rather, we must submit ourselves to their labors just as we would submit ourselves to God himself.

14 Preaching does not depend on the rhetorical skill of the preacher for its efficacy, though preachers ought to apply themselves in all respects to faithfully explicate and communicate God's Word.

Essential Commitments of a Local Church Pt. 4

Review:

I. We are Committed to a High View God
Rather than a Deification of Man.

II. We are Committed to the Absolute Authority
of Scriptures Rather than the Tradition of Man

III. We are Committed to Sound Doctrine
Rather Than the Dumbing Down of Doctrine.

IV. We are Committed to the Preaching of the Word Rather than Pragmatic Methodology

V. We are Committed to Integrated Worship with the Family rather than the Segregation of the Family

VI. We are Committed to Personal Holiness Rather than Worldliness.

VII. We are Committed to a plurality of Godly Leadership than the Business or Democratic Model.

VIII. We are Committed to Evangelism of the Sinner rather than Moral Reform of the Society.

IX. We are Committed to the Return of Jesus Christ rather than the Riches of Earth

It should be Noted that Preaching is not an add on to Worship.

It is not what we do once we finish worship thru music. Many erroneously believe that worship is only the music of the service and not the sermon.

Preachers should think of worship services not as exultation in the glories of God accompanied by a sermon. Preaching serves worship and Preaching is Worship.

Preaching itself is worship and is appointed by God to awaken and intensify worship. It does this by heralding the reality communicated through the words of Scripture, which was written to create and sustain worship.

Expository Preaching

is peculiarly suited for Christian corporate worship, for worship means knowing, loving, praising, treasuring, and showing the supreme worth and beauty of God.

Piper, John. Expository Exultation (p. 51). Crossway. Kindle Edition. Piper, John. Expository Exultation (p. 51). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

John Stott, states what it is meant by exposition:

“It is my contention that all true Christian preaching is expository preaching...To expound Scripture is to bring out of the text what is there and expose it to view. The expositor pries open what appears to be closed, makes plain what is obscure, unravels what is knotted and unfolds what is tightly packed.

Piper, John. Expository Exultation (pp. 51-52). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

It should also be noted that everything under the sun is being offered up as substitute for preaching the Word. And if you do have a form a preaching, there are guidelines given that are suppose to make the Word of God more appealing.

We are being told more and more that we need to add gimmicks and attention getters to our sermons to spice them up and make them more entertaining.

I was actually told by another elder of an other church that the reason people come and listen to my preaching is because I am entertaining.

Some pastors have driven Harley Davidson motor cycles on stage,

One pastor Ed Young Jr. decided to get the attention for a sermon series he was planning on marital Relations by having He and his wife sleep in a bed on top of the roof of the church....saying, "It's time to bring God back in the bed and put the bed back in the church"

The stunts are endless, any given week you will find all kinds of stuff.

Another thing being taught that is that you need to be subtle in adding scripture to your sermon. You need to learn how to sneak it in.

More than 20 yrs ago, Rick Warren wrote “The Purpose Driven Church” His philosophy of Church Growth.

He said,

“ You cannot start with a Biblical Text expecting the unchurched to be fascinated by it. You must first capture their attention”

Many christians are so used to this approach, that they are shocked when they hear a preacher take a more direct approach and actually preach and teach the Bible.

The reality is that some pastors just don't believe the Bible is enough. It's not fun enough and it is boring.

This trend is seen in many books and websites that present themselves as gurus of church Growth methodology.

Here are some examples

An Article from Lifeway Christian Books
“3 simple ways to spice up your preaching”

1. Try something new.

Your preaching is the one thing you can change in your church and get away with it.

- **Preach as a biblical character complete with costume.**

2. Incorporate visuals.

We are a visual society. Use banners that coordinate with your sermon or sermon series. Employ props. Many sermons would be well suited to use an object to illustrate the main point. For example:

- **If you are talking about money have a suitcase with money pouring out of it.**
- **The woman at the well story would be well served with a pitcher of water.**

Helium-filled balloons were tied around the sanctuary to emphasize celebration in a recent sermon.³ Involve the audience.

Not only is our society more visual, they seek experiences.

- How can you engage your people in the sermon?
- What can you have them say or do or feel or hold that will draw them into the sermon?

This will require some thinking, but it is well worth the effort.

- I have given people small rocks to hold when I preached on David taking down Goliath with a rock from his sling.
- When I preached on Moses before the burning bush, I reminded the people that this place was holy ground, so I asked them to remove their shoes for the remainder of the service.

- Sometimes when I preach on trusting God with one's finances I asked the people to give their wallet or purse to their neighbor to hold during the sermon. (This one really keeps people awake.)
- Often, I ask people to repeat certain key words throughout the sermon.

3 Simple Ways to Spice Up Your Preaching
by [Rick Ezell](#) on Tuesday, September 15, 2015 at 7:00 AM

So the Word is not enough, we have to all this stuff to help.

Lesson

Why Preach the Word

1. The Command to Preach
2. The Content of Preaching
3. The Consistency of Preaching
4. The Concern for Preaching
5. The Conclusion of Preaching.

1. The Command to Preach

2 Timothy 4:1–2 (NKJV)

4 I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: ² Preach the word!...

Paul introduces the command, “preach the word,” in verse 2 with five preceding intensifiers. Each of them is chosen to strengthen and deepen and heighten the importance of the command to preach.

I doubt that anyone has ever overstated the seriousness that Paul is seeking to awaken here. 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: preach the word.

1. “I charge you . . .” The word is testify with a prefix that intensifies it and adds weight (diamarturomai). Keep in mind that Paul is setting up a command to preach. Yet he uses the word “solemnly testify” for his own exhortation. What does it mean to say, “I solemnly testify . . . preach the word”? Notice he does not say, “I solemnly command . . . preach the word.” The word testify seems to

imply that he is speaking in a court setting with huge things at stake. Testify suggests that he has seen something, or heard something, and is not merely speaking his own opinion. He is testifying to something he has seen or heard. And that encounter of seeing or hearing has sobered him in such a serious way that this litany of intensifiers is the result.

2. “in the presence of God . . .” “I charge [solemnly testify to] you in the presence of God . . .

Now we get a glimpse into the setting in Paul’s mind where he is delivering this testimony-command “preach the word.” He is in the presence of God. He is conscious of a special and close attention that God is paying to this testimony. The implication is that God is the one who has authorized this command. It is a testimony to the extent that it comes with the firsthand authorization of God. Paul is testifying to the fact that God is behind this command. God is watching over it closely to see that it is delivered. There is no higher authorization and no higher attendant to the proceeding of this testimony. “I testify to you in the presence of God.”

3. “and of Christ Jesus . . .” “I testify to you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus . . .”

Adding Christ Jesus to the attendants at this

solemn testimony to preach the word does not increase the authority. There is no authority higher than God. But it does multiply the persons who have a massive stake in what preaching is about. God is the author of the word to be preached, and Jesus Christ is the center of its story. If you are going to sober Timothy as you command him to preach the word, tell him that the command is being delivered in the presence of the author and the subject of all preaching — indeed all reality.

4. “who is to judge the living and the dead . . .” “I testify to you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead . . .

Of the hundreds of things Paul could have said about Jesus, he says this: Jesus is to judge the living and the dead. Why? The point seems to be that when it comes to preaching, the stakes are raised higher than any rewards or threats in this life. In preaching we are dealing with persons and realities that are vastly greater than this world. Their existence and their rewards and punishments exceed this life. Christ is active in this world, governing the living. And Christ is — and always will be — active beyond this world, dealing justly with those who have died. This glorious person is unavoidable in life and inescapable in death. Everyone meets him as judge sooner or later. These are the great matters of preaching. Paul wants us to feel this weight.

5. “and by his appearing and his kingdom . . .” “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 . . .”

Five of the six uses of the word appearing (epiphaneian) in the New Testament occur in the Pastoral Epistles. It refers at least once to the historical appearing of Jesus in the incarnation (2 Tim. 1: 10) and at least twice to the future second coming of Christ (1 Tim. 6: 14; Titus 2: 13). The other two could go either way, including this text (2 Tim. 4: 1, 8). Perhaps the ambiguity is intentional. Do you love his appearing (past and future, 1 Tim. 4: 8)? And do you feel the weight, for preaching, of the appearing of God himself in history (past and future)? That is to say, “Preacher, keep this in mind, you herald the word of the coming king of the universe” — the one who came once not to judge but to save (John 3: 17), but now will come to judge. In these days, when you are called to preach (between his two appearings!), he may seem distant because he does not appear. But I am telling you to preach knowing this — never forgetting this — he has appeared, and he will appear. And when he does return, he will be king, and his kingdom will be openly established. No longer will he say, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18: 36). He will reign openly and unopposed. All his opponents will be cast into outer

darkness (Matt. 22: 13; 25: 30). No more will they be a factor. And all the truth you ever preached will be publicly vindicated, and all those who have turned away with itching ears will be put to shame. Therefore, Timothy, once more, “I solemnly testify to 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, preach the word.” That kind of extended, exalted, intensifying introduction to the command to preach the word is extraordinary. Therefore preaching — clarifying and heralding, expository exultation — is of extraordinary importance.

Piper, John. Expository Exultation (pp. 68-69). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

2 Timothy 4:1–2 (NKJV)

4 I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, *who* will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:

2 Preach the word!...

The English word preach (or some form of it) occurs eighty times in the ESV. Almost every one of these uses come from the Greek words euangelizomai (“preach good news”

2) or kēryssō (“preach” or “herald”). Both words refer most often to the public proclamation of a message to the world, not just to a church gathered for worship.

Piper, John. Expository Exultation (pp. 53-54). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

2. The Content of Preaching

2 Preach the word!...

2 κηρυξον τον λογον

The term word (logon) is not a technical term in Paul's writings that refers only to one thing. Even in the Pastoral Epistles (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus),

Paul uses the word twenty times, referring, for example,

to trustworthy sayings (1 Tim. 1: 15),

“words of the faith” (1 Tim. 4: 6),

“words of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Tim. 6: 3),

“the pattern of . . . sound words” (2 Tim. 1: 13),

“the word of God” (2 Tim. 2: 9),

and “the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2: 15).

It would be unwarranted to claim that “preach the word” referred to anything less than the word of Scripture just mentioned two verses earlier.

The chapter break between those verses is misleading.

Without the break, it reads like this:

“Continue in what you have learned . . . , the sacred writings. . . . All Scripture is breathed out by

God. . . . I charge you . . . preach the word” (2 Tim. 3: 14– 4: 2).

In other words, preach the Scripture. All the Scripture. It is all inspired. It is all profitable. It all makes wise toward salvation in Jesus. It all moves the church toward good works.

The word is written. To underline the obvious but easily overlooked: this means that the word to be preached has come to us in a written form— in a book.

In the sentence, “All Scripture is breathed out by God,” the phrase, “all Scripture” (pasa graphē) refers to all the writing— the “sacred writings” (hiera grammata)— referred to in the previous verse, that is, the Jewish Scriptures, the Old Testament.

Which means that the preparation for preaching will be, in large measure, book work. We must find the content of our preaching in a book.

Of course, the preaching must not be dead. It must not be bookish.

But it must be book-derived.

Book-faithful. Book-saturated. Book-balanced.

As we will see in due time, it must be Spirit-given, Spirit-shaped, Spirit-carried, and Spirit-delivered. But the Holy Spirit inspired a particular book— the Book— and broods over the Book, and lives to exalt the Christ of the Book (John 16: 14).

So the content of our preaching is never less than a faithful rendering of this Book.

Piper, John. Expository Exultation (p. 63). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

3. The Consistency of Preaching

2 Timothy 4:2 (NKJV)

² Preach the word! **Be ready in season and out of season.** Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

In order to be effective, a faithful preacher must understand the scope of his commission, which Paul here summarizes.

Like any other effective worker, he must **be ready**. This is the second command Paul uses in verse 2 and translates *ephistēmi*, which has a broad range of meanings as determined by tense, mood, and voice. It often connotes suddenness, as in Luke 2:9 (“suddenly stood before”) and Acts 12:7 (“suddenly appeared”; cf. 1 Thess. 5:3); or forcefulness, as in Luke 20:1 (“confronted”) and Acts 4:1; 6:12; 23:27 (“came upon”). In the aorist active imperative, as here, the word carries the complementary ideas of urgency, preparedness, and readiness. It could be used of a soldier who is ready to go into battle on a moment’s notice or of a guard who keeps continually alert for any threat of infiltration or attack by the enemy.

For the faithful preacher, **be ready** carries similar meanings of gravity and vigilance. He should feel like Jeremiah, who felt under divine compulsion to prophesy. “If I say, ‘I will not remember Him or speak anymore in His name,’ ” he testified, “then in my heart it becomes like a burning fire shut up in my bones; and I am weary of holding it in, and I cannot endure it” (Jer. 20:9; cf. 5:14).

While Paul stayed in Caesarea for a few days on his way back to Jerusalem after his third missionary journey, the prophet Agabus “took Paul’s belt and bound his own feet and hands, and said, ‘This is what the Holy Spirit says: “In this way the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles,” ’ ... the local residents began begging him not to go up to Jerusalem.” But Paul’s immediate reply was, “What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 21:11–13).

Such a sense of readiness and willingness to serve the Lord at any cost and at any time not only should characterize every faithful preacher but also every faithful Christian. Peter exhorted his readers, most of whom were suffering severe persecution from Rome, “Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with

gentleness and reverence” (1 Peter 3:15). Writing to believers in the church where Timothy now was ministering, Paul implored, “Be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil” (Eph. 5:15–16).

In his classic *Lectures to My Students*, Charles Spurgeon wrote, “What in a Christian minister is the most essential quality for securing success in winning souls for Christ?... earnestness.

(serious in intention, purpose, or effort; sincerely zealous)

And if I were asked a second or third time, I should not vary the answer.... Success is proportionate to the preacher’s earnestness” ([Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1955], 305).

Only continual study of God’s Word, fellowship with Him in prayer, and submission to His Holy Spirit can keep alive a sense of exhilarating eagerness to preach.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1995). [2 Timothy](#) (pp. 175–176). Chicago: Moody Press.

4. The Concern for Preaching

2 Timothy 4:3–4 (NKJV)

³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will

heap up for themselves teachers; ⁴ and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

The Reason we Preach the Word is Because Preachers are not Preaching the Word. They are saying everything else but the Word. They are cute and fun sharing times with a few bible verses sprinkled in to satisfy the biblically ignorant.

This is an extraordinarily dangerous time we are living in. The attacks on the authority, sufficiency and perspicuity of the Word of God have reached a fever pitch.

Rationalism, Liberalism, Naturalistic Darwinianism, Mysticism, Pentecostalism, Pragmatism, just to name a few.

This is not a time to be timid, this is not a time to be unclear.

This is not a time for short, Biblically starving sermons.

We need Men of God to Preach the Word of God with Authority, and Clarity with NO Compromise. The Elder or Preacher who is not teaching his flock the Word of God in a Consistent manner needs to leave the ministry. You are doing more harm than Good

Any church that is caught up in the modern pragmatic approach of Gimmicks to reach God and

shallow sharing rather than Bold proclamation of the Whole Counsel of God needs to shut their doors and sell the Building. You are a disgrace to the God who builds His Church and the Christ who died for her.

If you are a pastor who gives in to the temptation not to preach certain hard doctrines, that are clearly in the text of Scripture, or you knowingly misinterpret them in order not to offend..... Find yourself another Job.

You are a cancer in the Body of Christ and a disease infecting the sheep and taking needed monies that could support the church and missions.

³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine,

2 Timothy 3:1 (NKJV)

3 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:

Kairos does not refer to chronological but epochal **time**, a period or era of **time**. It is the same word Paul uses in the previous chapter in regard to “dangerous times” that would come “in the last days,” and doubtless refers to the same period of time as here.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1995). [2 Timothy](#) (p. 180). Chicago: Moody Press.

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; **4** and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

Instead of receiving **sound doctrine**, such churches fiercely reject it, **wanting** rather **to have their ears tickled** with unbiblical notions that raise their comfort level, justify or overlook their sins. They also reject as unloving anyone who presumes to hold them accountable to doctrinal beliefs and moral standards they deem outmoded and irrelevant. Consequently the preacher whom they least like to hear brings the message they need most to hear.

Not surprisingly, therefore, such false Christians **will accumulate for themselves** ungodly **teachers in accordance to their own** ungodly **desires**.

Noted Bible scholar Marvin R. Vincent wrote insightfully, *“If people desire a calf to worship, a ministerial calf-maker is readily found”* (*Word Studies in the New Testament*, vol. 4 [New York: Scribner’s, 1904], 321).

4 and they will turn
their ears away from the truth, and
 be turned aside to fables.

The compound verb **will turn away** is from *apostrephō*, meaning “to cause to turn away” and is active. **Will turn aside** is from the closely related *ektrepō*, meaning “to cause to turn aside” but is passive. The verse therefore can be literally rendered, “And *will cause themselves* to turn away their ears from the truth, and *will be caused* to turn aside to myths.” *Ektrepō* sometimes was used medically to refer to a dislocated joint. The minds and hearts of those who reject God’s truth become spiritually dislocated, knocked out of joint, as it were. Paul used the same verb in his first letter to Timothy of those who had “already *turned aside* to follow Satan” (1 Tim. 5:15, emphasis added).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1995). [2 Timothy](#) (p. 183). Chicago: Moody Press

5. The Conclusion of Preaching.

Ephesians 4:11–14 (NKJV)

¹¹ And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³ till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

¹⁴ that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,