



3 | 1 TIMOTHY 4:1-8

PREACH THE WORD

If the church is to flourish, the elders must be committed to preach the word faithfully, evangelizing sinners and preparing the saints for eternity with the Lord.

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WELCOME: We are glad you are here! Be sure to grab a Welcome Packet if you are visiting with us.

Introduction

Today, we set aside two godly men for ordination and install them officially as elders of our congregation. **Joe Nowosielski and Emilio Huante**, you have been observed for several years, examined by the elders for both your life and doctrine, and we have found you faithful as valiant soldiers of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Today is your ordination day. You both remind me of **George Whitefield**. He didn't seek ordination to the gospel ministry. He **struggled with his own unworthiness**, and I've felt that from both of you. But Whitefield came to a point where he had to surrender to God. **"I began to think," he said, "that if I held out longer, I should fight against God."**¹ As elders we have observed your shepherding gifts and later, we will lay our hands upon you as a sign of approval of your gifts and character and ministry.

On this day we charge you, in a line of faithful, sober, true doctrine that spans back to the apostles and Paul's charge to **"preach the word."**

In that spirit, we want to charge you two men to be faithful with the word of God given to you this day. You are charged to shepherd and disciple and teach the congregation today. You must **never deviate** from the truth of God's word in anyway. **Do not skip over the hard parts**. Do not be afraid to proclaim as a herald the truth of God's word to both sinners and saints. This charge, first given to Timothy by the apostle Paul is for both of you today. Listen clearly, as you will give an account on the last day for this charge. Consider God's holy word in the second epistle of Timothy, chapter 4.

2 Timothy 4:1-8 | 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: ² preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. ³ For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, ⁴ and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. ⁵ As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. ⁶ For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

There's coming a day when our ministry will be over. On that day, we want you men to have been faithful. Your faithfulness will be reflected in the congregation that you have been called to serve.

¹ George Whitefield in Lilian M. Quiller Couch, *Reminiscences of Oxford: by Oxford Men, 1559-1850*, Selected and Edited (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1892), 111.

Key thought: If the church is to flourish, the elders must be committed to preach the word faithfully, evangelizing sinners and preparing the saints for eternity with the Lord. We must not be timid, but boldly and lovingly preach the word without editing or addition.

So today, **I charge you my brothers, Joe and Emilio** in the presence of God and his Son Jesus Christ to **preach the word**. I charge this congregation to hold these dear men and faithful soldiers to fulfill their calling. Each of us as elders are calling on the congregation to help us fulfill our calling. Let us consider this solemn charge. It is a charge for the elder who is to be a preacher of the word of God.

1. THE CHARGE FOR THE PREACHER (4:1-4)

The charge itself is to “**preach the word**” (4:2). We are **not to edit** the word. It needs no improvement. David exclaimed, “**Forever, O LORD, your word is settled in heaven**” (Psa 119:89). The word does not need eloquence or sophistication. The word needs to be proclaimed, applied, and lived out! This is the charge.

Paul is now an **aged warrior of the faith**, whose godly life was totally committed to the service of Christ, and he would **soon be put to death** under the wild governance of **Nero who played his fiddle while Rome burned**. The senseless emperor blamed it on the Christians, and according to church history, **Peter and Paul would be put to death on the same day**: Peter by being **crucified** upside-down, and Paul, as a Roman citizen, by the less painful death of **decapitation**. Paul has one thing he wants to tattoo on Timothy’s heart before he departs this world: the solemn and sober charge to “preach the word” without edits or apologies.

THE WITNESSES OF THE CHARGE

In light of the daunting charge to preach God’s authoritative, infallible, inspired word, Paul summons **two witnesses to join him** in charging those who would preach God’s holy word: the living God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 4:1 | 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.

Timothy must heed Paul’s instruction, not merely because of Paul but also because of the fact that **God the Father and the Lord Jesus are watching**. Not only are they watching; they are also **enforcing the apostle’s command**, for Christ will one day “judge the living and the dead”—a reference to the **final judgment**, at which God will settle all accounts and at which no one would want to come up short through disobedience.²

Timothy and all ministers are to **carry out their ministry under the very eye of God**. Moreover, when Christ returns to this earth to establish his eternal kingdom, and to judge the living and the dead, pastors and all other servants of God will have to give an

² Denny Burk, “2 Timothy,” in *Ephesians–Philemon*, ed. Iain M. Duguid, James M. Hamilton Jr., and Jay Sklar, vol. XI, ESV Expository Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 489–490.

account. Such a thought must surely act as **a great incentive to all pastors to take their calling very seriously**.³

JOHN KNOX: LOCKED HIMSELF IN ROOM. John Knox, often prayed, “Give me Scotland or I die,” but he was not so **fearless** at first. When he was first called to preach as a young man, he **locked himself in his room and wept for days** because of the fearful seriousness of **such a mighty calling**.⁴ Likewise, Paul’s deepest desire for Timothy was for him to understand the seriousness of the call to be an elder and a shepherd of a congregation.⁵

THE WORK OF THE CHARGE

Timothy, we know, has an introverted personality, it seems. He may be reticent at times to step up to his calling, so Paul gives him an imperative: **preach the word**.

2 Timothy 4:2 | Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

The message to Timothy is, “Though you may be shy, though you may prefer to remain in the background, you must give yourself to the public preaching of the word of God.”⁶

The Work of Preaching

2 Timothy 4:2a | Preach the word.

The word translated “preach” here means “**to proclaim as a herald on behalf of another**.” It simply suggests a picture of an imperial herald, trumpet in hand, standing at attention in a public place and conveying a mandatory proclamation in the emperor’s name. There is no room for discussion or debate. The herald is not there to argue the pros and cons of the demand; he is there to proclaim it and call for instant obedience.⁷ **The Monarch under which we labor** as ambassadors is none other than the King of kings and the Lord of lords, Jesus Christ. **Proclaim his message. Herald his word.**

Understand that **the call to preach is not a matter of preference** or our **personality**, or natural **giftedness** as we understand it. It is simply a matter of obedience. If God has called you to preach, that must be the signature of your soul and life.⁸

There is no hint here that preaching is thought of primarily as the **self-expression of your dynamic personality**. There’s no charge for that. We are not to preach our subjective experience or **feelings** so as to neglect Scripture.

³ Peter Williams, *Opening up 2 Timothy*, Opening Up Commentary (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2007), 90.

⁴ Andrew Lang, *John Knox and the Reformation* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1905), 28.

⁵ John F. MacArthur Jr., *2 Timothy*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), 168.

⁶ R. Kent Hughes and Bryan Chapell, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus: To Guard the Deposit*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2000), 244.

⁷ John Phillips, *Exploring the Pastoral Epistles: An Expository Commentary*, The John Phillips Commentary Series (Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp., 2009), 2 Ti 4:2a.

⁸ Hughes, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus: To Guard the Deposit*, 244.

The whole counsel of God is to be preached faithfully without editing or addition.⁹ Be a man of the word! Study it. Learn the themes and outlines of all the books. Memorize the great passages. Immerse yourself in its narratives. Know its great souls. Walk in and with them.¹⁰ Don't preach yourself (*cf* 2 Cor 4:5). Preach the word, the whole word, and nothing but the word. **Preach the Old Testament. Preach the New Testament. Preach book by book, line upon line, precept upon precept.** Follow Paul's example and **preach the whole counsel of God** (*cf* 20:27).

LET THE WORD DO THE WORK: LUTHER. **Let the word do the work.** Listen to what Luther said when people attributed the success of the gospel in Germany to him. He repudiated it and said the word did it all.

What is Luther? The teaching is not mine. Nor was I crucified for anyone ... I simply taught, preached, wrote God's word; otherwise, I did nothing. And while I slept or [fellowshipped] with my friends Philip and Amsdorf, the word so greatly weakened the papacy that no prince or emperor ever inflicted such losses upon it. I did nothing; the word did everything.... When we spread the word alone and let it alone do the work, that distresses the wicked one. For the word of God is almighty, and takes captive the hearts, and when the hearts are captured the work of Satan will fall of itself.¹¹

Dear brothers, preach the word. Don't edit the word. Don't add to the word. Don't fail to preach the word. Don't give in to your hyper scrupulousness or fear. You are both men called by God to preach. Don't hold back. Don't slow down. **Souls are falling over the precipice to hell.** Preach. Preach. Preach the word.

The Work of Perseverance

2 Timothy 4:2b | Be ready in season and out of season.

"In season" designates a time or season that is "good" or "convenient." **"Out of season" designates a time or season that is "not" good or "inconvenient."**¹² In other words, you should preach when you feel like it and when you don't. You ought to preach when you have much time to prepare, and when you have little. You should give yourselves to the constant studying and preaching of God's word.

This is a command. Be ready to preach the word when it is popular and convenient and when it isn't. Be ready when to do so is politically correct and when it is not. Be ready when it is well received and when it is not. Faithful preaching is always popular (in season) with God. Popular opinion, culture, and / or tradition must never determine whether or what you preach. You are under divine compulsion to deliver God's truth. **You are not to become seeker-sensitive but Scripture-sensitive.** Be preaching and applying God's word **at all times.**

⁹ Thomas C. Oden, *First and Second Timothy and Titus* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1989), 135.

¹⁰ Hughes, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus: To Guard the Deposit*, 246.

¹¹ Martin Luther, "The Second Sermon, March 10, 1522, Monday after Invocavit," *Luther's Works, Vol. 51: Sermons I*. J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, eds. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1999), 78.

¹² George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2013), 453.

CHRYSOSTOM. John Chrysostom, the golden mouthed preacher of the third century said we are to be preaching and living out the word in everything.

Therefore, let food, and education, and family time, and the other necessities of life have a definite and regular time. But let instruction about the love of truth from above have no set hour—let all the time belong to it. “In season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort.”¹³ —John Chrysostom, 3rd century pastor

I think of the good example of **John Calvin** who worked tirelessly teaching and preaching the word. His friend, Nicolas Colladon, said this about John Calvin’s dedication to preaching and teaching the word.

Calvin did not spare himself at all, working far beyond what his power and regard for his health could stand. He preached commonly a total of **ten times every two weeks, including twice on Sunday**. In addition, every week, he lectured three times in theology.¹⁴ —Nicolas Colladon

You can hear Calvin’s desire to preach the word in a letter he wrote in 1546:

Apart from the sermons and the lectures, there is a month gone by in which I have scarcely done anything; in such a wise, I am almost ashamed to live thus useless.¹⁵ —John Calvin

He says, “apart from the sermons and the lectures.” Over twenty sermons and 12 lectures in one month is a wasted month to him! **He had been a bit ill**, he told his friend, but he didn’t want to use that as an excuse to “**grow rusty through laziness**.”¹⁶ Calvin and so many at that time who were fighting against the apostasy of the Roman Catholic Church were ready to “preach the word in season and out of season.” What a drive and an example to preach the word! **We should have the same drive, no matter what we feel like.**

Timothy was not to wait for convenient times to preach. He was to pay no heed to the cultural **winds, and what was popular**. He was to take no notice of the **curious or hostile stares of the crowd**. He was not to stay home because he was tired, because a thousand other things clamored for his attention, or because the **times were too dangerous** for public proclamation of the gospel.¹⁷ Timothy and all God’s preachers everywhere are to preach the word **regardless of season**.

The Work of Correcting False Doctrine

2 Timothy 4:2c | Reprove.

The minister must probe by **reproving** and **correcting false teaching**. Wrong doctrine brings wrong living. The minister of God’s word is to **bring people under conviction for their sin** because of the way they believe. They are in error and need

¹³ John Chrysostom in Peter Gorday, *Colossians, 1-2 Thessalonians, 1-2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture NT 9. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 271.

¹⁴ Nicolas Colladon in Frederik A. V. Harms, *In God’s Custody: The Church, a History of Divine Protection* (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 34.

¹⁵ John Calvin in Jules Bonnet, ed., *Letters of John Calvin: Compiled from the Original Manuscripts and Edited with Historical Notes, Vol 2* (Edinburgh: Thomas Constable & Co., 1857), 29.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Phillips, *Exploring the Pastoral Epistles*, 2 Tim 4:2.

correction. The same word was used in John 16:8 to describe the convicting work of the Holy Spirit in a human heart. He will “**reprove**” the world of sin.¹⁸

The Work of Rebuking Wrong Living

2 Timothy 4:2d | Rebuke.

Correction is showing your people where they are wrong, while **rebuke** is telling them to **stop**. Rebuke requires you to **censure behavior by preventing it** or bringing it to an end. This requires that you not be a people pleaser or popularity seeker—and certainly not a flatterer.¹⁹ The minister must also probe by **rebuking** wrong living. Those who are sinning need a **rebuke** for grieving the Spirit and blinding themselves with **rationalizations to sin** (1 Tim 5:20; 2 Tim 3:16; Titus 1:13; 2:15).²⁰ God’s word is powerful to accomplish what God intended in the lives of his people.

In our personal relationships, a word of warning and rebuke would often save another person from sin and disaster (Jas 5:19-20). Elders do this and set an example for the entire congregation. But that word must always be spoken with a **consciousness of our common guilt** with a tone of deep humility. It is not our place to set ourselves up as moral judges; nonetheless, it is our duty to speak that warning word when it needs to be spoken.²¹

The Work of Encouraging Right Living

2 Timothy 4:2d | And exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

Those who were doing well he was to **exhort** and **encourage**.²² You must come alongside your people with encouraging words—“That’s right. You are doing fine. You’re making progress. That was beautiful.”

Yet exhortation includes even more than encouragement. “Exhort” is to “urge strongly.”²³ In preaching, we are **commanding people to obey God**, and encouraging them as they follow Christ. Such is the difference between preaching and lecturing: a lecture is oriented toward explanation and data, whereas a **sermon is oriented toward action**. Preaching is authoritative exhortation of people about what they ought to believe and act on by issuing commands to that end.²⁴ We are encourage and command people who have escaped the pit of sin and hell to stay out of that pit and help others out of that pit. Yes, you escaped! Stay out! Help others!

The meaning of the Greek word for **patience** embraces and elevates the love that will not let us go, the love that “many waters cannot quench” (Song 8:7), the love that “suffers

¹⁸ Phillips, *ibid*.

¹⁹ Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 454.

²⁰ A. Duane Litfin, “2 Timothy,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 758.

²¹ William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, 3rd ed. fully rev. and updated, The New Daily Study Bible (Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 232.

²² *Ibid*.

²³ Bauer, W., F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999, παρακαλέω.

²⁴ Denny Burk, “2 Timothy,” in *Ephesians–Philemon*, ed. Iain M. Duguid, James M. Hamilton Jr., and Jay Sklar, vol. XI, *ESV Expository Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 490.

long, and is kind” (1 Cor 13:4, NKJV).²⁵ In doing this work of exhortation, you are called to immense “patience” because you will rarely see quick results to your ministry.

Correction and rebuke must be teamed with careful and constant **teaching**. We are to be constantly applying God’s word to every situation. We have to teach concepts and habits of godliness over and over and over again. There needs to be **patience and accountability**.²⁶

THE WARNING IN THE CHARGE

Why is the charge so important? Because the time of apostasy is upon us.

2 Timothy 4:3-4 | For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions,⁴ and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

Jesus explained in the **parable of the four soils** that many church attending professing believers are really unbelievers. Indeed, it is only the fourth soil, the fruit-bearing soil, that has real faith (cf Mt 13:1–23; Lk 8:1–15). People love to hear something different and sensational (“what their itching ears want to hear” is literally “tickled in their hearing”).²⁷ **False converts have itching ears and insatiable passions, and they will eventually turn away from the faith and go back to the world.**

This is why preachers must resist the itch of novelty or popularity and what is “cool” and fashionable. **People want “something more” than the sound teaching of the word** of God, has led many to focus on feelings and experience.²⁸ But it is only the word of God that is “a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path” (Psa 119:105).

People want to feel good about themselves and **they follow teachers who give them what they want.** People don’t want to think too deeply about their sin, relationship with God, etc. They want their cravings for good sensations satisfied; they want their flesh to be coddled. People want personal gratification. They don’t want to change what they believe, especially if it means personal change in their lifestyle.

MYTHS: God’s redemptive truth, which deals with sin and damnation, with the necessity of inner change, etc. (cf 2 Tim 3:15–17) they cannot stomach. They *turn away* (as in 2 Tim. 1:15) from it and *turn aside* (as in 1 Tim 1:6) to “the myths.”²⁹ Today there are many popular **myths: teaching based in lies.** There is the myth of preaching for “**your best life now.**” False teachers love anything but the eternal realm. They trust in “so-called” science, much of which, especially **evolution**, is myth. They point to the myths of the **prosperity gospel** today: all focused on temporal happiness. There are the myths of **cheap grace and easy believism:** live however you want, God’s grace is a license for lasciviousness. Then there is the myth psyching yourself up in worship to a point of mysticism and emotionalism that does not push people toward godliness, but instead confusion.

²⁵ John Phillips, *Exploring the Pastoral Epistles*, 2 Ti 4:2.

²⁶ Hughes, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus: To Guard the Deposit*, 246.

²⁷ J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1963), 207.

²⁸ Williams, *Opening up 2 Timothy*, 96.

²⁹ William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 4, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953–2001), 312.

Today preachers fill sports arenas by telling people what they want to hear about their money or politics, by entertaining them, and or by fixating them on curiosities. The **masses prefer myth to truth.**

That is why you must preach the word in its historical setting and in the context of the whole Bible, making the appropriate biblical connections and demonstrating all the ways it is a revelation of Jesus Christ. **The Holy Spirit will take that word preached** to the hearts and transform the life.³⁰

2. THE CHARACTER OF THE PREACHER (4:5)

Lots of people have gifts, and they may teach the word while it suits them, but it takes the character of Christ to persevere to the end. Lots of preachers love to hear the sound of their voice more than the sound of the word of God. It is therefore absolutely vital that those who preach God's word have the highest level of character and integrity.

SOBRIETY

The minister must demonstrate and live out the sobriety that every Christian ought to have. Life is not a game. People's souls are on the line. There is a heaven and there is a hell. We've been given the gospel to preach, and "to whom much is given, much will be required" (Lk 12:48). It means we will be held accountable and responsible for what we have. Tremble with this great responsibility. **Sobriety should mark the man of God.**

2 Timothy 4:5a | As for you, always be sober-minded.

"Be sober-minded" literally means to "**keep your head** in all situations" and calls us to live continually in a state of alertness as we meet heretical teaching and / or wrong living.³¹ We could translate it more dynamically as "stay sane" or "keep **your head screwed on straight.**" To do this, the shepherd must always have **a heavenly focus** (Col 3:1). He must not lean to his own understanding (Pro 3:5-6). He must have a "sound" and **disciplined mind**, or else he will be controlled by fear or frustration (1 Tim 1:7).

The shepherd is sober—not out of control in his emotions, but calm, collected and watchful as he lives and teaches. He **walks in the fear of the Lord**, with an intentional awareness of the presence of God. He speaks with sobriety and presence of mind.³² The man of God **avoids impulsive and rash words and actions.** He lives and thinks and teaches intentionally in the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace... all the way to self-control. **Practicing the presence of God brings about an awe of God and seriousness of life.**

SUFFERING

The man of God has thick skin and a soft heart. He knows how to suffer without becoming cynical and hardened. "All who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim 3:2). This is true for every Christian, especially the elder and

³⁰ Hughes, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus: To Guard the Deposit*, 247.

³¹ Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, vol. 34, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 245.

³² Donald Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 14, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 186.

shepherd. There is a **daily spiritual warfare that we must endure**. You will fulfill your ministry in hardship and weakness, and the power of Christ will rest upon you.

2 Timothy 4:5b | As for you... endure suffering.

Paul has already entreated young Timothy:

2 Timothy 2:3, NIV | Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

When you **join the brotherhood of elders and shepherds**, you get a **target** on your back. You will suffer more than you were before, not only because of the weight of care for the **precious saints of the congregation**. Yes, you will suffer with them as you weep with those who weep. Their hurts and hardship become yours as well. But there is something more destructive that you must be ready for. **The devil will come at you time and again**. He will try to bring **fear** through his hideous methods of **anxiety** and **discouragement**. He will make you tremble with the “what ifs” and always accuse you and all the saints of their failings. He wants to convince you of the **impending downfall of Christ’s church**. But it’s not true. Christ who dwells in you is greater than that wicked one in the world. Satan knows that Christ is building his church, and the gates of hell shall never prevail.

How might you then endure suffering dear brother shepherds? Satan’s time is short, so **resist the devil with God’s word**, and he will most certainly flee from you. As Jesus defended himself in the wilderness with the word of God, so must you. Walk in the word that you preach. The word is your shelter and comfort. The Spirit must constantly be your comfort, or the devil will be your constant accuser. You must study and sweat in the word. **Read the word each day until it grows sweeter and sweeter to you**. Let it give you that firm foundation, that steadfast heart.

SYMPATHY

The shepherd not only tends the sheep within the fold but looks for those God is calling into the fold. The elder is then to always be doing “the work of an evangelist.”

2 Timothy 4:5d | As for you... do the work of an evangelist.

While some seem to be particularly gifted for the task of evangelism (21:8; Eph 4:11), the term “evangelist” should be construed **not as an office but rather as a task** to be fulfilled by all pastors.³³

The job of an evangelist is simply to be a “proclaimer of the gospel”, presumably with the aim of seeing sinners converted by its message.³⁴ Charles Spurgeon described the attitude of evangelism for every elder and every believer well.

If sinners will be damned, at least let them leap to hell over our bodies. And if they will perish, let them perish with our arms about their knees, imploring them

³³ I. Howard Marshall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, ICC (London/New York: T&T Clark, 1999), 804.

³⁴ Denny Burk, “2 Timothy,” in *Ephesians–Philemon*, ed. Iain M. Duguid, James M. Hamilton Jr., and Jay Sklar, vol. XI, *ESV Expository Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 491–492.

to stay. If hell must be filled, at least let it be filled in the face of our exertions and let not one go there unwarned and unprayed for.³⁵—Charles Spurgeon

Oh, that the elders would have a burden for sinners like our Lord Jesus who sweat great drops of blood praying for their redemption and laying his life down that they might be reconciled with God. Jesus took the wrath of God for sinners! Good news! Good news! Let us shout it from the roof tops. Proclaim it to every creature. If the shepherds won't evangelize, the sheep won't evangelize and the church itself will fossilize and die.

STEADFASTNESS

A shepherd must never give up. He must be steadfast and **persevere**. There will be good days and bad days. But God is faithful. He will sanctify his people. Your job is to be faithful and carry on all the responsibilities of your ministry. Never give up! Never give in! "Fan into flame your gifts for ministry!"

2 Timothy 4:5e | As for you... fulfill your ministry.

The preacher and elder is to **make full proof of his ministry**. Timothy was to carry out the commission that God had given him.

A WORD FOR SHIPS: FULL WIND OF THE SPIRIT

The word translated "fulfill" your ministry is a marine industry term of a ship moving along with all sails fully opened, being driven by the wind. For the minister to fulfill his ministry, he has to be "all in" with all sails set and opened fully, filled with the wind of the Spirit.

Timothy needed to set his sails and make an all-out effort because there was still a **fair wind at his church in Ephesus**. The Spirit was moving. Surely the storms would be coming, but no sails needed to be shortened. Timothy was to keep moving forward, onward, whether under full sail with a favorable wind or even with a howling tempest on the horizon.³⁶ Full sail ahead! Onward!

Someone once said, "The test of your character is what it takes to stop you." What is it that is keeping you from fulfilling your ministry? Lay it before God. Leave it behind. Is there self-will or worldly allure? Is there pride or passion? Is there fear or frustration. Leave it behind. Set your gaze on Jesus, and let your heart be carried by the Spirit, straight ahead!

3. THE CROWN OF THE PREACHER (4:6-8)

The preacher has died to the ambitions of this life. He does not seek a crown on earth, whether that is the praise of men or possessions or pleasure. Those are fading away. Paul later speaks of a fellow preacher that went wayward and left the faith.

2 Timothy 4:10 | Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me.

³⁵ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, "Consolation in Christ", *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Vol 7* (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1861), 1

³⁶ John Phillips, *Exploring the Pastoral Epistles: An Expository Commentary*, The John Phillips Commentary Series (Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp., 2009), 2 Ti 4:5d.

The preacher's crown is given by his King, the Lord Jesus who is King over all kings and Lord over all lords. Every governor and president and mayor will bow the knee to Jesus Christ. Why would we ever want to "fall in love" with this "present world"?

A PRESENT CROWN

Paul's **present crown would not be mansions on earth but martyrdom.**

2 Timothy 4:6 | For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.

Paul's death was approaching. The shadow of the executioner's ax was nearing his neck. Paul likens his death to an Old Testament drink offering (cf Ex 29:40–41; Lev 23:13; Num 15:5–10; 28:7). Here he alludes to the pouring out of his blood in martyrdom.³⁷

Paul says, "**I'm about to depart to glory! It's a seaman's word.**" When a ship would be sailing out of a harbor, and the ropes and the moorings would be untied and the anchor would be weighed, and that ship would sail out of one harbor to arrive in another harbor, they used this same word, *departure*, *release*, as that ship was released and being set free. And the great Paul is saying in his heart and in his mind, "I'm about to set sail. I'm sailing out of this harbor. But there's another one that I'm coming to."³⁸

Paul had been on **three missionary journeys**, and now he was about to take the **ultimate journey**. He reminded us: "To be **absent from the body** is to be **present with the Lord**" (2 Cor 5:8). His journey would be over just like that!

Paul is said to have died in October of 67 A.D., the fourteenth year of Nero's reign (cf Jerome, Eusebius). Clement of Rome in his *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 5:5–6, written around 96 A.D., almost thirty years after Paul's death says this of great apostle.

By reason of jealousy and strife Paul by his example displayed the prize of patient endurance. After he had been imprisoned seven times, had been driven into exile, had been stoned, had preached in the East and in the West, he won the noble renown which was the reward of his faith, having taught righteousness unto the whole world and having reached the farthest reaches of the West; and when he had borne his testimony before the rulers, so he departed from the world and went unto the holy place, having been found a notable pattern of patient endurance.³⁹

Jerome later says that Paul and Peter were martyred the same day, Peter through crucifixion and Paul through beheading.

Paul, then, in the fourteenth year of Nero on the same day with Peter, was beheaded at Rome for Christ's sake and was buried in the Ostian way, the twenty-seventh year after our Lord's passion.⁴⁰ —Jerome, early church father

What a seemingly short ministry Paul had. Less than twenty-seven years. Most of that time, he was in crushing and paralyzing circumstances. Yet his motto was, "when I am weak, then am I strong, for the power of Christ rests upon me" (2 Cor 12:9-10).

³⁷ Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 458.

³⁸ Adrian Rogers, "Worth It All," in *Adrian Rogers Sermon Archive* (Signal Hill, CA: Rogers Family Trust, 2017), 2 Ti 4:6–8.

³⁹ Clement of Rome, *The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians*, 5:5–6 in Joseph Barber Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers: A Revised Text with Introductions, Notes, Dissertations, and Translations* (New York: Macmillan, 1890), 274.

⁴⁰ Jerome, *De Viris Illustribus (On Illustrious Men)*, 5. See also Eusebius, *History of the Church*, 2.25.

The present crown of Timothy or any of us today who follow Christ is to be poured out for Christ like a drink offering. It may not be martyrdom, but as one of my youth pastors used to tell me, we always need to be ready to “preach, pray, or die.” Get on with the work. The fact that the time of Paul’s “departure” is at hand is all the more reason that **Timothy must take over much of what Paul has been doing.**

A PAST CROWN

As Paul nears his own death, he summarizes his legacy in three metaphors: a **soldier**, an **athlete**, and a **steward**. These verses were Paul’s last written words, and, as such, they stir our hearts for a legacy that leads people to glory when we are gone.⁴¹

2 Timothy 4:7 | I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

Everyone can start something, but it takes a man of character to finish the race. As Paul entered the last days of his life, he could see a legacy. He fought as a good soldier. He finished his race as a great athlete. And he would receive the commendation of a faithful steward.

The Medal of a Soldier

2 Timothy 4:7a | I have fought the good fight.

When God saved Paul, he **didn’t invite him to a vacation**; he invited him to a **confrontation** in the spiritual realm with the forces of darkness.

Ephesians 6:12-13 | We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day.

God didn’t invite Paul to **take a cushion but to take up his cross**. As you study the life of Paul, you find out that sometimes **spiritual warfare put Paul in physical danger**. His body had been scarred by many lashes and stonings. The devil at times brought **physical harm to Paul**. He had a long prison record. He had a 195 stripes laid on his back. He had been stoned and left for dead. He says, “I bare in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus” (Gal 6:17, KJV). Paul could truthfully say, “*I have fought a good fight.*”

Paul has already alluded to the fact that **we are soldiers in the spiritual unseen realm**. Our warfare is not carnal, but spiritual. We are to put on “the whole armor of God” that we might stand firm and tall, moving forward in the Christian life, despite satanic hostilities against us. Paul’s legacy was that he never backed down. He never gave up. He never fainted in the heat of war. He pressed on and on and on. It took a Roman soldier with an ax in his hand to stop the apostle Paul. That ought to be our legacy. Never retreat!

The Crown of an Athlete

2 Timothy 4:7b | I have finished the race.

⁴¹ Phillips, *Exploring the Pastoral Epistles*, 2 Ti 4:5.

It's not about how an athlete begins his race, but how he finishes. We've all seen athletes be so far ahead in their race only to be overtaken by the underdog who wants to finish well. I found this much out about the devil. The devil does not primarily try to get you to go in the wrong direction. He doesn't try to turn you around. He's too clever for that. He just simply tries to sidetrack you. Dear saint, put your eye on the prize!

Philippians 3:14 | I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

We are to be "looking unto Jesus," who is "the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb 12:2). We're to run the race that is set before us, **looking unto Jesus**.

The Commendation of a Steward

2 Timothy 4:7c | I have kept the faith.

Paul was a good steward of the gospel.

He was faithful in *preservation*. Paul didn't edit the gospel, but "guarded" the sacred "deposit" he was given by the Lord (2 Tim 1:14).

He was faithful in *proclamation*. He didn't only preach the faith when it was convenient. When things got hard, he did not deny the word of God. He did not deny the lordship of Christ. He preached the whole counsel of God in season and out of season.

He was faithful in *sanctification*. Paul also kept the faith because he lived out the Christian faith. He practiced what he preached. His life was conformed to the glorious image of Jesus Christ (Rom 8:29). What a faithful steward Paul was. One day all of us who are faithful to keep the faith will hear the great commendation of our Lord:

A FUTURE CROWN

Paul says, besides our earthly legacy and crown, we have a future crown.

2 Timothy 4:8 | Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

This is it for Paul. Imagine that you are there watching the old apostle. There he is in the Mamertine Prison. He signs the letter. Outside his prison, perhaps, he can hear the executioner sharpening his lethal axe. He knows before long he's going to be beheaded.

He hears a noise. The guards come. They extract Paul from that prison: "Come, Paul, it's time to go." And there he goes. See him? His old, stooped shoulders, his torn cloak, his grey head. See that **broken, scarred body**? See those squinty eyes? There he goes, in my estimation, one of **the greatest Christians** that ever lived.

The guard walks alongside him, and he says, "Paul, are you singing?" "Oh, just humming." "I don't think I've ever heard that song. What is it that you're singing?" "Oh, just a little chorus we learned at our church. It will be worth it all when we see Jesus."

And they take that great apostle. They put his head on the executioner's block. The soldier says to Paul, "We always give our prisoners a chance to say one last statement. Do you **have anything to say before the axe falls**?"

"Oh, yes, I do" says Paul.

"What is it?" asks the executioner.

“Jesus Christ is Lord—Jesus Christ is my Lord and Master.”

Down comes the executioner’s axe. He is beheaded. The next scene is glory—to be absent from the body; to be present with the Lord. (2 Cor 5:8)

I don’t know what happened that next instant, but I believe that Paul looked into the face of his Savior and said, “Lord, I wasn’t big. Lord, I was ugly. I had a poor voice. Lord, I had a weak body. But, **Lord, I fought a good fight. Lord, I finished my course. Lord, I kept the faith.**” And I’m not certain, but I believe I know what Jesus said to him, also. I believe that Jesus said to him:

Matthew 25:23 | Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.

I believe the Lord Jesus placed on his head a crown of righteousness. And do you know what I believe Paul did that instant? He took it off and threw it at the feet of Jesus.⁴²

Conclusion

I want a crown not to wear—not at all; I want a crown to throw at the feet of the One who loved me so much that He died for me. And I want it said of me, “He fought a good fight. He finished his course. He kept the faith.”

At this time I want to call for our new elders to come forward for their installation as elders.

ELDER VOWS

Do you reaffirm your faith in Jesus Christ as your own personal Lord and Savior?

I do.

Do you believe the Scripture of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, totally trustworthy, fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, the supreme, final, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

I do.

Do you sincerely believe that the Statement of Faith and Doctrine of this church contains the truth that is taught in the Holy Scriptures?

I do.

Do you promise that if at any time you find yourself out of accord with any of the statement in our Confession of Faith you will on your own initiative make known to the other elders the change which has taken place in your views since your assumption of this vow?

I do.

Have you been encouraged, as far as you know your own heart, to accept the office of elder from love of God and sincere desire to promote His glory in the Gospel of His Son?

I have.

⁴² Adrian Rogers, “Worth It All,” in *Adrian Rogers Sermon Archive* (Signal Hill, CA: Rogers Family Trust, 2017), 2 Ti 4:6–8.

Do you promise to submit to your fellow elders in the Lord?
I do, with God's help.

Do you promise to strive to be zealous and faithful in promoting the truths of the Gospel and the purity and peace of the Church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise?

I do, with God's help.

Will you be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all your duties as elder, and will you endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the Gospel in your manner of life, and to walk as an example before this congregation?

I will, by the grace of God.

Are you now willing to take responsibility in the life of this congregation as an elder to oversee the ministry and resources of the church, and to devote yourself to prayer, the ministry of the Word and the shepherding of God's flock, relying upon the grace of God, in such a way that Living Hope Bible Church, and the entire Church of Jesus Christ will be blessed?

I am, with the help of God.

RESPONSE OF THE CONGREGATION

Do you, the members of Living Hope Bible Church, acknowledge and publicly receive Joe and Emilio as elders, as gifts of Christ Jesus to this church?

If so, say We do.

Will you love them and pray for them in his ministry, and work with him humbly and cheerfully, that by the grace of God you may accomplish the mission of the church, giving them all due honor and support in their leadership to which the Lord has called them, to the glory and honor of God?

If so, say We will.

Presentation by Jerry Soen

Sing Doxology

Final song if time.