

## 2 Timothy 4:1-5

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/2tim/2tim-4/2-timothy-41-5/>

*Paul passes the torch of ministry to Timothy, charging him in the presence of God and Christ, to preach the gospel. Timothy must always be ready to teach, at all times of the year, to rebuke and patiently instruct. Eventually people will not be willing to hear the truth of God's word.*

In this last chapter, Paul charges Timothy. Paul might have considered this somewhat of a passing of the torch to Timothy, as his successor in the ministry. We can know it was well received, since this letter made it into scripture. Had Timothy rejected the letter, we can reasonably assume he would not have put it into circulation. This chapter makes clear that Paul expects he will die soon. He expresses a desire for Timothy's company, and a few physical comforts in his last days on earth. Unlike in his other writings, Paul says he has finished his race of life successfully. In Philippians he appeared to hope he would be martyred for Christ. Here it is made clear that he will get his wish.

Now Paul gives Timothy what appears to be an ordination or sorts, perhaps passing the baton of ministry leadership. Timothy appears to be Paul's successor in ministry. Paul begins his *charge* to Timothy with this preamble: *I solemnly 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.* Paul's *charge* is not in the "name" of Jesus, as we might expect. It is *in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus*. Paul is not commanding Timothy with the authority of Christ. He is charging Timothy *in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus*.

Paul is not the authority who will judge whether or not Timothy faithfully discharges his assigned responsibilities. It is *Christ Jesus who is to judge the living and the dead*. Paul is making clear to Timothy that it won't be him to whom Timothy will give account. Timothy will give account to Jesus Christ Himself. Paul also charges Timothy *by His appearing and His kingdom*. As Paul charged Timothy in 2:12a, we will only gain the great reward of reigning with Jesus in *His kingdom* if we endure in serving Him faithfully.

The way for Timothy to endure faithfully is to continue to discharge his gifting to serve the Body of Christ. For Timothy, given his gifts and calling, that includes the following list:

- *preach the word;*
  - Timothy's particular calling is to *preach the word*.
  - The *word* is the truth of the Bible. It is the scripture that Paul described just a few verses before as being "inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
  - Timothy is to *preach*, which means to proclaim this Not his version of the word.
  - Timothy is to *preach the word* so that the people to whom he ministers may receive the great benefit that the word provides.

- The Greek word translated *word* is “logos.” In Greek philosophy it meant much more than “word” generally conveys in English. It included the idea of the meaning and purpose for life. John says Jesus is the “logos” (John 1:1). Jesus is the source of meaning and purpose, because all creation was made by, through, and for Him (Colossians 1:17).
- *be ready in season and out of season;*
  - Timothy is not to exercise his gifts to minister to others when it happens to be convenient. He is to be *ready* to exercise his gifts when convenient (*in season*), as well as when not convenient (*out of season*.)
- *reprove,*
  - This is the same root word as in 3:16-17, which says the scripture is for “reproof.” Since Timothy is to preach the word/scripture, it should be expected that his preaching would accomplish the impact of the word/scripture, which is “for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16b-17).
- *rebuke,*
  - This word can be translated “honor” or “chide”. It carries the connotation of “charging” or “admonishing.” It is to admonish people to do what is honorable, as well as admonishing them to avoid doing what is dishonorable.
- *exhort,*
  - This can also be translated “encourage” or “beseech.” It is the idea of rallying people; getting their attention, for their own good.
- *All with great patience and instruction.*
  - All of Timothy’s efforts need to be with *patience*, because Timothy’s purpose is to benefit others. The goal is not “bend them to my will.” The goal is to show them the path that leads to their best interest, for their benefit.
  - All of Timothy’s efforts need to be oriented toward Timothy’s goal is not to bend people to his will. It is to equip them to make the best choices they can make.

Timothy is to have a sense of urgency in training those around him, *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine*. People will not always be open to listening to what is true. So it is important to strike while the iron is hot. The word translated “doctrine” is the same word translated “teaching” in 3:16, which describes the scripture as being “inspired by God and profitable for teaching.” There will come a time when men will refuse to listen to teaching that is *sound*, or true. Instead they will desire *to have their ears tickled*. Rather than wanting to hear what is true, they will want to hear what validates what they already believe.

Accordingly, these men who want to have their wicked behavior accommodated *will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires*. The word translated *desires* is translated in 2 Timothy 2:22 as “lusts.” They will find teachers that tell them it is good for them to fulfill their lusts. As a result, these men *will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths*. They are not seeking the truth. The truth reproveth, and corrects. They prefer to be affirmed.

Paul exhorts Timothy to avoid such folly. Seeking those who tell you what you want to hear is common, but foolish. Paul exhorts Timothy to rather *be sober in all things, endure hardship, do*

*the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.* One of the reasons people desire to be affirmed is because being reprovved and corrected is hard. Change is difficult. It is often more comfortable in the short run to live in a false reality. To *be sober* is to see reality as it is. To be drunk is to enter a false reality.

### **Biblical Text**

**4 I solemnly 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: <sup>2</sup> preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. <sup>3</sup> 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, <sup>4</sup> and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. <sup>5</sup> But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.**