



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

OUR SOLEMN CHARGE! - 2 TIMOTHY 4:1 WYOMING JANUARY 25, 2017

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There is no sacrifice, mockery, alienation, rejection, desertion, imprisonment or even death too high a price to pay to put everything on the line for Christ. The importance and the rewards of a faithful life and ministry, not to mention the honor and glory of the Lord we trust and serve, far outweigh any personal sacrifice our trust and service may require.¹ May this be our passion and pursuit as we live each day we are given in this New Year! And may we take this solemn charge given by Paul to Timothy as our mandate, as our pursuit, our commission for life!

I. THE SOLEMN CHARGE-2 TIMOTHY 4:1

(1) "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: (2a) preach the word..." 2 Timothy 4:1-2a

Paul dispenses this final, solemn charge to Timothy...*preach the Word!* This divine mandate is given for all believers in Jesus Christ no matter what their position might be in life. Just as Paul reminds Timothy that ministry is carried out under the very eye of God Himself, so too we must remember this truth. Every believer will give an account to God for what has been done with their time. Therefore, we must take our calling very seriously. It's not about pleasing people but pleasing Christ. These are Paul's last written words to Timothy and he seeks to encourage and challenge Timothy to be faithful to the trust he has been given by God. Even though Paul was about to be executed for his faith, he didn't want Timothy derailed from the ministry God had given him to fulfill. And he wanted Timothy to remain strong and courageous in the face of persecution and hardship and *preach the word!*

A. "I SOLEMNLY CHARGE YOU" - 2 TIMOTHY 4:1A

Paul seeks to capture Timothy's undivided attention as he dispenses this most weighty charge to *preach the word!* In the Greek, "*solemnly charge*" is a serious commission that carries the idea of giving a forceful order or directive. Paul's words here resound with passion regarding this most solemn obligation for which he is about to give his life. This is a mandate, a divine call, a charge to preach the gospel. It is with love for Christ and His gospel, and a love for his son in the faith Timothy, that Paul lays upon him the charge to preach the Word (2 Timothy 1:1-4) and fulfill his ministry (2 Timothy 4:5-8). As Paul comes to the end of not just this final letter, but his life, he wants to encourage and challenge Timothy to be faithful in his task, faithful to the trust he had been given by God... just as Paul had been... just as we must be! This solemn charge is a sobering responsibility for it is carried out in the very presence of God and

Christ Jesus. In fact Paul grounds his charge in four distinct realities which drive home the awesome responsibility we all have if we believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. So before we look at this solemn commission, let's look at the truths it rests in, and thus may it propel each of us forward to faithful, excellent service to the Lord.

1. THE FIRST REALITY- 2 TIMOTHY 4:1B

"I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus..."- 2 Timothy 4:1b

Paul speaks first of an eternal and unchangeable reality which is the actual presence of God and Christ Jesus with us as we fulfill our ministry! This is a continual reality for us as well. And so we must look at this charge in its divine setting... the very presence of Christ! Remember Timothy, you preach before God and of God Himself! And everyone called by Christ, constantly serves under the watchful eye of God and in His divine presence.

2. THE SECOND REALITY- 2 TIMOTHY 4:1C

"I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead..."-2 Timothy 4:1c

Next Paul reminds Timothy that someday his work would be tested by none other than Jesus Christ Himself. In fact everyone's work will be judged including yours and mine. No one will escape His divine judgment. The judgement of unbelievers will involve a determination of eternal destiny as Revelation 20:11-15 describes. The judgment of all believers will be an evaluation of works described in 1 Corinthians 3:1-15. Paul is focused on 2 Corinthians 5:10 which refers to the judgment by Christ as to how we spent our life and the quality of the ministry God gave us to fulfill. We must do every task with excellence and in such a way that we can offer it to Christ. We can't be concerned about the verdict of others on our life. We must long for one thing; "Well done!" by Jesus Christ. And if we all did our work in that spirit, the difference would be incalculable!²

Our accountability is to the Lord Who sees all. Do we live our lives with that kind of holy accountability; mindful of the One in Whose presence we serve. Do we seek earnestly to serve the Lord with excellence, devoting ourselves to those things which are eternal? John MacArthur tells of the French sculptor who created the Statue of Liberty as a special gift to the United States. He labored with such incredible detail. Little did he know that one day, hundreds of thousands of people would actually fly over it every year and be able to appreciate the excellence of his work in the smallest of detail. Oh may we have the compulsion to serve Jesus Christ with our best;

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OUR SOLEMN CHARGE! - 2 TIMOTHY 4:1-2a

(4:1-2a) *“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: preach the word...”*

desiring to please Him with excellence and with a view to the One Who sees all.³ Because Paul sums up this solemn charge of ministry simply as *“preach the word”* (2 Timothy 4:2a), we must ask ourselves; is God pleased with my treatment of His Word? Do I preach for the honor of God? Am I about sharing the most important thing in life with others...Jesus Christ and Him crucified?

3. THE THIRD REALITY- 2 TIMOTHY 4:1D

“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...”-

2 Timothy 4:1d

Titus 2:13 speaks to believers as *“looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Christ Jesus...”* And here Paul reminds Timothy of the reality that Jesus Christ will visibly return in the future. Therefore we are to do our work in such a way that all things will be ready whenever He appears.

“appearing” Greek **“epiphaneia”** means to shine forth, used of the visit by an Emperor to a province or a town. When the Emperor would come, everything was to be put in perfect order.

Jesus Christ will return again. In view of His *“appearing”*, would you not want to be ready and prepared? All believers will give an account at Christ’s coming. So live your life in view of His imminent and certain, future return so you are not ashamed at His coming for this is our *“blessed hope”*. Live so as not to be ashamed before your Lord and a watching world.

4. THE FOURTH REALITY- 2 TIMOTHY 4:1E

“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:”-2 Timothy 4:1e

The last reality in which Paul grounds his solemn charge to Timothy, and all believers, is by *“His appearing and His kingdom”*. John Calvin wrote this, “Although Christ rules now in heaven and in earth, until this future point His kingdom has not been made clearly visible, rather it lies in the shadow of the cross and is strongly opposed by His enemies. Christ’s kingdom will truly be established when He has defeated His enemies and every opposing power and so publicly displays His majesty.”⁴ Handel wrote about this in his masterpiece *“The Messiah”*, referring to Revelation 11:15 when he wrote, “The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ”.

In light of the reality that Jesus Christ will return and set up His kingdom, our work must be such that it stands the judgment of Christ. Our lives must be such that we welcome the appearance of

the King. Our service must be such that it will demonstrate the reality of our citizenship of the kingdom of God.⁵ And may these realities charge our soul as it must have Timothy’s even in the darkest of times, because Jesus Christ is present with us and His appearing and kingdom are coming.

With these realities in mind, Paul presses Timothy to his task, and ours, *“preach the word”*. This is our solemn charge to which we have the privilege and responsibility to fulfill as we live in the very presence of Jesus Christ Himself. May you and I be pressed to this mission with the desire of faithfulness and commitment to excellence!

¹MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary on 2 Timothy*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.54-55.

²Barclay, William, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. Westminster John Knox Press: Louisville, Kentucky, 1956, revised 1975 and 2003. Pg.228.

³MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary on 2 Timothy*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.170.

⁴Calvin, John, 1509-1564. *The Crossway Classic Commentaries; 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*. Crossway: Wheaton, Illinois, 1998. Pg.157.

⁵Barclay, William, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. Westminster John Knox Press: Louisville, Kentucky, 1956, revised 1975 and 2003. Pg.229.