



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

**“PREACH THE WORD, BE READY...” - 2 TIMOTHY 4:2
WYOMING FEBRUARY 8, 2017**

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We have heard the good news of the gospel because of people like Timothy and Paul who were faithful to their mission. Half of the people who have ever lived are alive today... most of whom do not know Christ... preaching the Word is the most important responsibility we have been given. Be prepared for, courageous in and sensitive to God given opportunities to tell the good news and preach the Word... God's message! This was Timothy's mandate and this is our solemn charge!

I. “PREACH THE WORD, BE READY...” - 2 TIMOTHY 4:2

*(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: (2) preach the word, be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.”
2 Timothy 4:1-2*

First we preach! Colossians 1:25-29 concisely states what we herald. “We proclaim Him...”! 2 Corinthians 4:5 says, “For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord...” It is the complete and perfect self-revelation of God Himself and of His divine will for mankind. It is the Word that transforms the heart by the Holy Spirit at work convicting, convincing and revealing the truth. It is only His Word that the Lord calls us to herald and publicly proclaim that moves the hearts of the hearers.² The great Puritan preacher Richard Baxter said this of preaching, “I preached as never sure to preach again; as dying man to dying men.” Such is the heart we must have as believers to herald God’s Word with urgency and conviction. And with this same urgency, Paul issues these imperatives that must direct our lives.

A. “BE READY”- 2 TIMOTHY 4:2B

As believers we must be in a constant state of readiness to proclaim the message entrusted to us.

“be ready” Greek “**ephistemi**” aorist, active imperative that 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.³ It’s a readiness and willingness to serve with preparedness, at any cost, at any time. Stand by, be on hand, alert with urgency.

As heralds of God’s message to the world, must know we are handling matters of life and death; announcing the sinner’s plight under the judgement of God, the saving action of God through the death and resurrection of Christ and the summons to repent and believe. We must be ready, having a sense of urgency in light of eternity and the destiny of souls. This call to action should characterize every faithful Christian. Peter wrote to believers being persecuted for their faith; calling on them to always be ready to give

a defense to everyone who asks, to give an account for the hope that is in you. (1 Peter 3:15) We are talking about the attitude of attention that may at any moment be pressed into action.⁴ It’s staying to the task no matter what, knowing we are always on duty. It is heralding our Lord’s message with conviction, earnestness. We must never lose our sense of urgency because the message is of such critical, eternal importance. Puritan preacher Richard Baxter wrote this, “Let the people see that you are in good earnest... You cannot break men’s hearts by jesting with them, or telling them a smooth tale. Men will not cast away their dearest pleasures upon a drowsy request of one that seemeth not to mean as he speaks, to care much whether his request be granted.”⁵

We must overcome all barriers and difficulties, never giving up or giving in for the sake of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul even wrote in Acts 21:11-13 that he was ready to be bound or ready to even die for the Lord Jesus Christ. Does this imperative to “be ready” to serve Jesus Christ with preparedness at any cost and at any time characterize your life?

B. “IN SEASON AND OUT OF SEASON”- 2 TIMOTHY 4:2C

Paul insists that our call is for radical availability!⁶ It is imperative that we are on duty at all times, with a sense of urgency and readiness.

“in season” Greek “**eukairos**” meaning the time is opportune.

“out of season” Greek “**akairos**” meaning the time is not opportune.

The urgency to herald the gospel is always in season, always opportune and always profitable. We must count every time an opportunity to speak of Jesus Christ. This is a Biblical appeal against laziness. Consecrated persistence is the order of the day. And yet are we way to hesitant to speak to others about Christ?

John Stott warns that Paul’s injunction is not to be taken as an excuse for the insensitive brashness which has at times characterized our evangelism and brought it into disrepute. We have no liberty to barge into other people’s privacy or tread clumsily in their lives.⁷

At the same time, if we wait until the occasion seems completely favorable, it will never come. We must always be on duty. Let our live be known for readiness and not laziness. God’s Word is powerful to change the hearts of all people in all places, at all times.⁸

C. “REPROVE, REBUKE, EXHORT”- 2 TIMOTHY 4:2D

Paul calls on us to apply the Word in three ways. Each directive is an imperative because sin must be addressed in the church. Since sin totally separates unbelievers from God and separates believers from close fellowship with God, it is important that we are made aware of

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our sin, become disgusted by our sin and encouraged to repent and turn from our sin. These imperatives must not ever be done in a way so that it drives one to despair, taking away heart and hope. Rather communicated from a place of humility with an understanding of our common guilt.

“**reprove**” Greek “**elegmos**” meaning correct and refute.

“**rebuke**” Greek “**epitimeson**” meaning exposing error.

“**exhort**” Greek “**parakaleo**” to come along side with encouragement.

Paul isn’t saying that Scripture is valuable for finding fault but rather that God’s Word is valuable for convincing people of error in their way and pointing them to the right path. This is what it means to **reprove**. Scripture exposes sin such as Hebrews 4:12-13 referring to Scripture as a “*two edged sword*” the same word used in Ephesians 6:17. Scripture is a divine sword that exposes sin in the life of believers. It penetrates the mind, soul and heart so sin can be dealt with true confession and repentance. Therefore, Scripture is the divine plumb line by which everything is measured. God’s Word enables us to see ourselves for who we really are and who we are in God’s sight. As believers we must refute and show error and misconduct with the careful use of Scripture to correct.

If reproof is showing people they are in sin, then rebuke is telling them to stop sinning. Paul calls believers in Ephesians 5:11 to expose sin and in 1 Timothy 5:11 to **rebuke** those who continue in sin. We must remember that a word of warning and rebuke could often save another from sin and disaster. It is out of love that we rebuke another. Rebuking is never condemning nor focused on failings. Rather it is the desire to bring one to repentance and right standing with God after falling into sin.

Paul also commands believers to **exhort**, to come along side in love and encouragement with the focus of spiritual maturity which is becoming like Christ. It is our privilege to remind all of God’s keeping grace, sustaining mercy and immeasurable strength freely given. We must give tender, sympathetic admonition and encouragement to the fainthearted and discouraged.

D. “WITH GREAT PATIENCE AND INSTRUCTION” - 2 TIMOTHY 4:2E

Correction and rebuke must be teamed with careful teaching and patience or they will become unprofitable.

“**patience**” “**makrothume**” aorist, active imperative meaning long suffering, self-restraint.

Patience is a spirit which never becomes irritated, never despairs, never regards anyone beyond saving, and possessing the resolute belief in the changing power of Christ.⁹ Paul is speaking about patience with people. A believer’s growth in Christlikeness is slow. We are not to become exasperated with others for we ourselves are firmly, yet lovingly and patiently held accountable by God Who is our supreme example of patience. Our urgent zeal must be tempered with patient gentleness. We are to be faithful and preach the Word and the results are always the responsibility of the Holy Spirit. We can afford to wait patiently for Him to work. However solemn our commission and urgent our message, there can be no justification for a brisk and impatient manner.¹⁰ Psalm 145:8 reminds us that the Lord is gracious and compassionate and slow to anger. Romans 2:3-4 reminds us of the patience of God towards sinners and it’s His kindness that leads us to repentance. By God’s grace we are called to display our Father’s patience to His people for He has certainly given that to us. Preaching the Word, being ready in season and out of season, reproofing, rebuking and exhorting must all be done with tireless patience.

Finally we are called to proclaim the Word with much instruction and teaching. To be profitable, the rebuke and exhortation must be accompanied with teaching and sound instruction in truth. Preaching is heralding the facts while teaching is explaining these facts. Godly patience together with clear and careful instruction is great ministry.

In 2 Corinthians 2:16 Paul asks, “*Who is equal to such a task?*” and gives the answer in 2 Corinthians 3:5, “*but our adequacy is from God.*” We must never forget that!

Jesus said in John 9:4, “*As long as it is day, we must do the work of Him Who sent me; night is coming when no one can work.*” Time is short in light of eternity. Be about your commission with earnest.

¹Barton, Bruce B., Veerman, David R., Wilson, Neil, *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*. Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.: Wheaton, Illinois, 1993, Pg. 220.

²MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary on 2 Timothy*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.175.

³MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary on 2 Timothy*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.176.

⁴Hiebert, D. Edmond, *Second Timothy*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1958. Pg.105

⁵*The Reformed Pastor*. Epworth Press, 1950. Pg.145.

⁶Hughes, R. Kent and Chapell, Bryan, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus; To Guard the Deposit*. Crossway Books: Wheaton, Illinois, 2000. Pg. 245.

⁷Stott, John R.W., *The Message of 2 Timothy; Guard the Gospel*. Inter-Varsity Press: Downers Grove, Illinois, 1973. Pg. 107.

⁸Platte, David; Akin, Daniel L.; Merida, Tony, *Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary: Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*. B&H Publishing Group: Nashville, Tennessee, 2013. Pg.204.

⁹Barclay, William, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. Westminster John Knox Press: Louisville, Kentucky, 1956, revised 1975 and 2003. Pg.232.

¹⁰Stott, John R.W., *The Message of 2 Timothy; Guard the Gospel*. Inter-Varsity Press: Downers Grove, Illinois, 1973. Pg. 108.