



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

“BE SOBER-MINDED IN ALL THINGS” - 2 TIMOTHY 4:4-5 WYOMING FEBRUARY 22, 2017

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There can be no doubt that the church of Jesus Christ has faced many difficult challenges from the world, from outside. But probably the greatest threats to the church have come from within. It has come from those who peddle their myths; error as truth. Scripture is openly contradicted and instead of obeying the truth, the false is celebrated. 2 Timothy 4:3-5 testifies that the time will come when those within the church will care nothing for what God wants and everything for what they want. Pleasure will be pursued while at the same time truth and doctrine will be turned away from. Being so obsessed with matters that are novel and trivial, they grow weary of the “old faith” based in Scripture and founded on sound doctrine. They love part of the gospel which is really no gospel at all.

I. “BUT YOU BE SOBER IN ALL THINGS” - 2 TIMOTHY 4:3-5

“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 and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths. But you be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.” 2 Timothy 4:3-5

Because many in the church will turn away from sound doctrine, wanting to have their ears tickled with the new and novel, then an empty gospel is preached to packed churches in our country today. Pulpits are overflowing with those who will preach what the people want to hear. This points to the continual unsatisfied craving wanting “something more” rather than the sound teaching of the Word of God. This has led many to focus on feelings and experiences neither of which are any kind of a firm foundation. They reject God’s revelation and pursue their own cravings.

A. “WILL TURN AWAY THEIR EARS FROM THE TRUTH AND TURN ASIDE TO MYTHS” - 2 TIMOTHY 4:4

Paul warns Timothy about those in the church who profess Christ but don’t truly confess Christ as Lord. It is those within the walls of the church that will reject sound teaching. What they prefer is their own likings, substituting their pleasures for God’s revelation. They will cause themselves to turn away from the truth and as a result they will be pressed to myths. The result of their personal cravings will turn away their ears from the truth to fables and falsehood.

“turn” Greek “**ektrepo**” 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. When God’s truth is knowingly rejected, falsehood is inevitably embraced, often unknowingly. Deliberate rejection of God’s truth makes one

vulnerable to Satan’s lies. Churches are filled with easy-believism. They come to have their sins approved but not their hearts cleansed or their souls saved. They want to feel good instead of being made good. Sadly, these myths will only religiously insulate people from the true gospel and drive them further from Christ.¹ Myths are useless ideas that corrupt the straight forward message of the gospel.

B. “BUT YOU BE SOBER IN ALL THINGS” - 2 TIMOTHY 4:5A

How is Timothy to react to all of this? Be silent? *No!* Because people are unstable in their mind and conduct, Timothy must be sober, stable, steady staying the course.² There is a force behind Paul’s words as he writes this 6th imperative to Timothy. Even though many will be led into deception by false teaching...you, Timothy must keep a clear head about everything.

“sober” Greek “**nephein**” means to abstain from wine, but metaphorically used to mean steady, unwavering, steadfast alert, calm, self-disciplined, under control, every faculty under full command, present tense.

In an unbalanced and insane world, believer must stand out for their stability. This is not an option. We must not lose heart when we face opposition or hang our heads when discouraged. And that’s not easy. We must remain calm and sane like a pilot flying through rough air. And we can pray for God’s help to grant us grace to keep a clear head about everything. Sober mindedness is an absolute necessity for faithfulness. By the power of the Holy Spirit we must be level headed and self-controlled. These are the marks of faithfulness.³

In the midst of a changing world, a changing church and even a changing gospel- which is not really the gospel, but a distortion of the true gospel of Christ- true believers must remain committed to the changeless truth of God’s Word.⁴ Timothy must not take his lead from what others are doing, but must remain-clear headed and stand firm in adversity, refusing to be trendy or compromising, to be an ear tickler or a man pleaser, but say as Paul, “*we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus.*” (2 Corinthians 4:5)

C. “ENDURE HARDSHIP” - 2 TIMOTHY 4:5B

What will be the cost for such faithfulness? We will experience reproach and even persecution. Because people will not listen to sound teaching, believers must be prepared to endure suffering. There will always be those who don’t want to hear the truth. Paul gives Timothy this 7th imperative; continue through conflict. Paul wrote earlier in 2 Timothy 2:3, “*share in suffering as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.*” True and genuine believers of Jesus Christ must be

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“BE SOBER-MINDED IN ALL THINGS...”-2 TIMOTHY 4:3-5 *“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 and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths. But you be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”*

ready to endure, suffer evil, whether it be from wounding criticism, false accusations, discouragement, doubt, loss and more. Believers who desire to obey Christ, follow Christ, love Christ... will face hardship. May that cause us to pray and not despair when Biblical faith becomes unpopular.⁵ Remember, there is no such thing as a faithful ministry that isn't costly. We read in Hebrews 13:23 where Timothy was released from prison. Hebrews was written shortly after 2 Timothy was written. The time of persecution came quickly which Paul wrote Timothy of.⁶

D. “DO THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST”- 2 TIMOTHY 4:5C

What's the extent of our commitment? Paul responds with this 8th imperative, *“do the work of an evangelist.”* Since people are so deceived about the truth and thus ignorant of the gospel, Timothy must be prepared to do the work of an evangelist, reaching the unbelieving world with the good news of the gospel. This must be the life work of every believer. It's not easy requiring hard work and there are but a few laborers as Jesus said in Matthew 9:37-38. It's labor and work like a hard working farmer in 2 Timothy 2:6; with plowing, sowing, everyday to see fruit and praying that God does the watering.

In Acts 17:17-18 Paul lives this example as he engages those in Athens with the gospel, giving a reasonable defense for the faith to skeptical intellectuals in that city. We must always remember it is God's mighty work that brings people to Christ but He gives us the privilege of being a part of His plan.⁷ We get to tell others about the Savior of our souls! Do you have a burden for the souls of all? Witness for Christ, proclaim the gospel of salvation and do that work; helping unbelievers become aware of their sinfulness, their lostness, and proclaim Christ as Savior and Lord.

E. “FULFILL YOUR MINISTRY.” - 2 TIMOTHY 4:5D

Paul issues his last imperative. Timothy, continue your work until it is completed.

“fulfill” Greek **“plerophoreo”** meaning to fully carry out, giving full measure, bring to completion with eagerness and whole heartedness..

No matter how many defect or abandon the faith, *“fulfill your ministry”*! Ministry refers to Christian work and service of all kinds. Never quit, don't falter, but remain faithful to Jesus Christ. Preach the Word in a truth-less world, pointing them to Jesus Christ! Complete your assignment and then go home to your Savior! Leave no act of service to God unfulfilled. Have as your number one ambition to be pleasing in service to God; to His church and all people.⁸

Let others get on with their “itching” and novelties and their readiness to satisfy the unhealthy craving for the sensational. Timothy, and all true believers in Jesus Christ, must remain clearheaded and stand firm on the great doctrines of the cross, the empty tomb, and the return of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory and power.⁹

John Stott rightly wrote, “The harder the times and the dearer the people, the dearer and more persuasive our proclamation must be.”¹⁰ Don't let any discouragement deter us from ministry, even when it is hard to gain a hearing for the gospel. We must constantly pursue, press hard after these tasks by God's grace. If you want to be faithful to the end, there are no short cuts in the middle!

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2 Timothy 4:3-5

¹MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary on 2 Timothy*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.183.

²Barclay, William, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. Westminster John Knox Press: Louisville, Kentucky, 1956, revised 1975 and 2003. Pg.234.

³Platte, 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.209-210.

⁴MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary on 2 Timothy*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.184.

⁵Platte, 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.211.

⁶MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary on 2 Timothy*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.185.

⁷Platte, 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.212.

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.212.

⁹Williams, Peter, *Opening Up 2 Timothy*. One Day Publications: Ryelands Road, Leominster, New Zealand, 2007. Pg. 96.

¹⁰Stott, John R.W., *The Message of 2 Timothy; Guard the Gospel*. Inter-Varsity Press: Downers Grove, Illinois, 1973. Pg. 111.