



# CAPITOL COMMISSION™

**"FOR THE TIME WILL COME..." - 2 TIMOTHY 4:3  
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*As believers we must be in a constant state of readiness to proclaim the message entrusted to us. As heralds of God's message to the world, we 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! And we must be available! The urgency to herald the gospel is always in season, always opportune and always profitable. We must be radically available to speak of Jesus Christ. This call to action must characterize every faithful believer! Does it portray your life?*

## **I. "FOR THE TIME WILL COME..." - 2 TIMOTHY 4:3**

*"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." 2 Timothy 4:3*

Keep in mind the context of these verses and who Paul is speaking about. He is speaking to Timothy about those within the church at Ephesus. Those who have professed the name of Christ yet not truly confessed Him as Savior and Lord. It is of these he referred to in 2 Timothy 3 you will recall. And it is a compelling reason for Paul to issue this solemn charge to "preach the word"! The preaching of God's Word is so critical then and now because "the time will come when..."

## **A. "FOR THE TIME WILL COME" - 2 TIMOTHY 4:3A**

Paul begins verse three with "For", or because. We must "preach the word, be ready in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with great patience and instruction" **because** the time is coming when people will not want to hear the truth of the gospel. Paul informs Timothy of the opposition he will face as God's herald for which Paul himself faced eminent martyrdom.

Jesus talked about these times when there will be persecution for Christ's name sake. Because they persecuted and hated Christ, the world will persecute believers of Jesus Christ. (John 15:18-21, 16:1-2) Therefore Timothy must be ready at all times to preach the word faithfully and fully with fearless uncompromising heralding of the Word of God. Because people will naturally move away from the truth, we too must take heed to these words for we see these times in our days as well...especially in our churches.

Essentially Paul is saying that when you see a storm approaching you must not take your time about your work, but you must work more diligently, because soon you will not have the opportunity for work.<sup>1</sup>

## **B. "WHEN THEY WILL NOT ENDURE SOUND DOCTRINE" - 2 TIMOTHY 4:3B**

Again, this time was characterized by professing Christians. Paul is saying that professing Christians will not endure the teaching of truth, the teaching of God's Word.

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"endure" Greek "anexontai" meaning holding up or holding on to, especially in the face of difficulty.

"sound" Greek "hugiaino" meaning to be healthy, we get the word for hygiene, rendered safe and sound.

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Paul warns that professing believers in the church would **not** hold on to, would not tolerate healthy, sound, safe doctrine. They would not tolerate sound doctrine, especially in the face of difficulty. And these were difficult times under the Roman rule. The truths of God will be intolerable to them. Does that sound familiar?

Timothy would face increasing resistance to sound teaching and preaching of God's Word that was spiritually healthy and nourishing as 2 Timothy 3:16-17 instructs. This truth, this sound doctrine becomes a rebuke to sinful living and thus these nominal believers who do not possess a genuine saving faith will resist the teaching of sound doctrine. They not only resist it, they hate it. Sound doctrine gives us instruction for godly living. But these were set in a direction away from God. They don't want to hold on to or put up with sound teaching from Scripture. That is why Paul calls on Timothy and all believers to retain the standard of sound words and guard the treasure entrusted to us from 2 Timothy 1:13-14 right from the beginning.<sup>2</sup> It is that very thing which many are trying to erode.

Today, some teach that they can't believe all the miracles of Scripture. Others deny the historical reliability of the Bible. Many fill stadiums with their corrupt health and wealth prosperity teaching. Yet...we must preach the truth because there is an absence of it in every generation. We need courageous "heralds" that will proclaim what Scripture teaches, preaching sound doctrine with power and grace. We must continue in the Word...keep learning it, keep believing it and keep heralding it!<sup>3</sup>

## **C. "BUT WANTING TO HAVE THEIR EARS TICKLED" - 2 TIMOTHY 4:3C**

Paul characterizes these "who will not endure sound doctrine" as those who want their "ears tickled". That was a figure of speech for the kind of curiosity which looks for interesting and spicy bits of information. Instead of having their heart transformed by the

### BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS, GOVERNOR & SPOUSES: TUESDAY AT 7:15AM, CAPITOL BASEMENT, ROOM 0109

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# Colorado

## “FOR THE TIME WILL COME...” - 2 TIMOTHY 4:3

*“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.” 2 Timothy 4:3*

preaching of the Word and sound doctrine, they reject it, wanting rather to have their ears tickled with comfortable, feel good messages that are shallow and overlooks their sin. This points to the continual unsatisfied craving for the new and the novel, 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.

Isaiah 6:8-10 describes Israel who had forsaken the Lord in this way, *“keep on listening, but do not perceive; keep on looking, but do not understand. Render the hearts of this people insensitive, their ears dull, and their eyes dim...”* Their ears were dull to the Lord because they had turned from the Lord to their own pleasures. No different today.

### D. “THEY WILL ACCUMULATE FOR THEMSELVES TEACHERS” - 2 TIMOTHY 4:3D

These professing Christians will accumulate for themselves teachers.

**“accumulate”** Greek **“episureousousin”** meaning to gather around themselves, heap up, amass.

This isn’t referring to just one or two teachers but rather they would gather, accumulate, amass a great number of teachers for themselves who would relieve their itching ears. Instead of listening to the truth, they find teachers to suit their desires. There has always been a plentiful number of false teachers available and thus falsehood that makes you feel good is willingly embraced, choosing to be deceived rather than carefully taught the truth.

Jeremiah 5:30-31 sadly writes about this saying, *“An appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land. The prophets prophesy falsely and the priests rule on their own authority; and My people love it so! But what will they do at the end of it?”*

It was easy to find such teachers in Timothy’s day. They were called *“sophists”*. They wandered from city to city offering to teach anything in return for money. They were looked down upon by the likes of Plato and Isocrates and others because what they were teaching was wrong. Timothy was surrounded by false teachers offering their sham knowledge to any who desired to listen. Today any teacher whose teaching tends to make people think less of sin is a menace to Christianity and an affront to God.<sup>4</sup> We sadly see the same present in our country today. There are plenty of teachers who have great followings and tickle the ears of their hearers. Note that it is the professing Christians that accumulate such false teachers and

they will never have great difficulty in finding these teachers who will not preach sound doctrine.

### E. “IN ACCORDANCE TO THEIR OWN DESIRES.” - 2 TIMOTHY 4:3E

So notice these professing Christians reject the sound doctrine and teaching of God’s Word for their own preferences, their own desires.

**“desires”** Greek **“epithumias”** meaning cravings, cravings for pleasure.

The criteria they judge their teachers by is not based on God’s Word as it should be but rather on their own subjective tastes. People will drift from healthy, sound teaching to what suits their own passions and cravings. Teachers are chosen not because of their faithful adherence to Scripture, but because of their ability to tickle “itching ears”. Isaiah 30:10-11 says this, *“Who say to the seers, “You must not see visions”; and to the prophets, “You must not prophecy to us what is right. Speak to us pleasant words, prophesy illusions. Get out of the way, turn aside from the path. Let us hear no more about the Holy One of Israel.”* Sad words coming from God’s people. Sound familiar?

But this is what happens even to this day. If people want to worship a golden calf, then they can find those who will lead them in that apostasy. Pulpits are packed with those who will preach what the people want to hear. But as Hughes writes, *“This is why we must sweat in our study and sweat in the pulpit.”*<sup>5</sup> Whatever our position or station in life, we must heed the call to faithfully *“preach the word”* for this is the only remedy for such evil deception.

God’s answer to the apostasy facing His people was simple and His plea is no less for our day. *“Return to Him from Whom you have deeply defected.”* (Isaiah 31:6) Return to Christ!

For those faithful followers of Jesus Christ, Paul’s solemn charge must become our great commission to *“preach the word, be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. 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.” 2 Timothy 4:2-3*

<sup>1</sup>Calvin, John, 1509-1564. *The Crossway Classic Commentaries; 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus.* Crossway: Wheaton, Illinois, 1998. Pg.159.

<sup>2</sup>MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary on 2 Timothy.* Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.181.

<sup>3</sup>Platte, 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.207.

<sup>4</sup>Barclay, William, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon.* Westminster John Knox Press: Louisville, Kentucky, 1956, revised 1975 and 2003. Pg.232-233.

<sup>5</sup>Hughes, R. Kent and Chapell, Bryan, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus; To Guard the Deposit.* Crossway Books: Wheaton, Illinois, 2000. Pg. 245.