

NOON BIBLE STUDY: 2 TIMOTHY 4 (PART 1)

2 TIMOTHY 4:1-4 - FINAL CHARGES

IN LIGHT OF ALL THE TROUBLE TO COME, PAUL URGES TIMOTHY TO REMAIN RESOLUTE IN HIS PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL. THAT IS THE GREAT COMMISSION OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AND THAT IS THE TARGET OF THE DEVIL'S ATTACKS ON GOD'S PEOPLE.

"IN SEASON AND OUT OF SEASON" IS AN ALLUSION TO FARMING. IN FARMING, THERE ARE TIMES WHEN IT IS NOT HARVEST SEASON. BUT THAT DOESN'T NECESSARILY MEAN THAT THE FARMER DOESN'T HAVE WORK OR RESPONSIBILITY SO THAT HE CAN BE READY WHEN THE HARVEST SEASON COMES.

PROVERBS 20:4 (NLT) - THOSE TOO LAZY TO PLOW IN THE RIGHT SEASON WILL HAVE NO FOOD AT THE HARVEST.

PROVERBS 20:4 (CSB) - THE SLACKER DOES NOT PLOW DURING PLANTING SEASON; AT HARVEST TIME HE LOOKS, AND THERE IS NOTHING.

"BE READY" MEANS TO BE PREPARED, TO BE ON STANDBY, READY WHEN CALLED UPON AND JOINED WITH THE IN/OUT OF SEASON LANGUAGE WE SEE PAUL CALLING TIMOTHY TO BE PREPARED AND READY TO PREACH THE WORD AT ALL TIMES - WHEN IT IS CONVENIENT OR NOT, WHEN IT SEEMS EASY OR NOT, WHEN THERE IS ACCEPTANCE OF THAT MESSAGE, OR NOT. TIMOTHY'S CHARGE ISN'T ABOUT THE HEARERS OF THE MESSAGE BUT ABOUT HIS OWN READINESS TO PROCLAIM.

Q - HOW CAN SOMEONE "BE READY"? WHAT ARE SOME INTENTIONAL STEPS A CHRISTIAN CAN TAKE TO BE "READY" TO PREACH THE WORD?

Q - HOW WOULD YOU ASSESS YOUR READINESS TO PREACH THE WORD? WHERE DO YOU FEEL UN- OR UNDERPREPARED?

Q - WHAT IS THE OPPOSITE OF BEING READY?

REPROVE - TO EXPOSE, CONVICT

JESUS USES THIS WORD IN MATTHEW 18:15 WHEN HE SAYS: "'IF YOUR BROTHER SINS, GO AND SHOW HIM HIS FAULT IN PRIVATE; IF HE LISTENS TO YOU, YOU HAVE WON YOUR BROTHER..." THE GOSPEL AND BIBLICAL PREACHING SHOULD SHOW US OUR FAULTS.

PAUL USES THIS WORD IN EPHESIANS WHEN HE SAYS:

EPHESIANS 5:11-12 - DO NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE UNFRUITFUL DEEDS OF DARKNESS, BUT INSTEAD EVEN EXPOSE THEM; 12 FOR IT IS DISGRACEFUL EVEN TO SPEAK OF THE THINGS WHICH ARE DONE BY THEM IN SECRET.

WE WANT TO LET THE GOSPEL AND BIBLE EXPOSE WHAT IS EVIL IN OUR HEARTS AND LIVES. THIS IS NOT EASY, BUT CRITICALLY IMPORTANT. IF THE WORD DOESN'T EXPOSE THESE EVIL THINGS, WILL WE JUST ALLOW THEM TO REMAIN?!

JOHN 3:20-21 - "FOR EVERYONE WHO DOES EVIL HATES THE LIGHT, AND DOES NOT COME TO THE LIGHT FOR FEAR THAT HIS DEEDS WILL BE EXPOSED. 21 "BUT HE WHO PRACTICES THE TRUTH COMES TO THE LIGHT, SO THAT HIS DEEDS MAY BE MANIFESTED AS HAVING BEEN BROUGHT IN GOD."

REBUKE - THIS WORD COMES FROM THE WORD USED TO MEASURE THINGS APPROPRIATELY. WHEN SOMETHING IS MEASURED, THE TRUE WEIGH OR VALUE IS SHOWN - THERE'S NO DENYING IT. YOU MIGHT THINK YOU HAVEN'T BEEN EATING TOO MANY CHRISTMAS COOKIES THIS SEASON, BUT THE SCALE TELLS THE TRUTH AND ESSENTIALLY "REBUKES" YOU WITH WHAT IS TRUE, REGARDLESS OF WHAT ONE MIGHT THINK OR FEEL. GOD'S WORD DOES THE SAME THING.

EXHORT - THIS IS AN IMPORTANT CONTRAST TO THE FIRST TWO CHARGES. THIS WORD MEANS TO "CALL ALONGSIDE" AND PAINTS A PICTURE OF SOMEONE CALLING A PERSON OVER TO ENCOURAGE THEM. IT'S ALSO TRANSLATED AS "APPEAL", "URGE", AND "ENCOURAGE". PEOPLE NEED ENCOURAGEMENT AND EXHORTATION IN THEIR WALK WITH CHRIST.

WITH GREAT PATIENCE AND INSTRUCTION - NOT JUST PATIENCE, BUT GREAT PATIENCE - AND WITH A REMINDER THAT INSTRUCTION/TEACHING IS THE WAY TO PROCEED. PAUL HAS REPEATEDLY ENCOURAGED TIMOTHY (AND US) TO TEACH AND INSTRUCT AND HAVE PATIENCE AS WE DO.

THE PREACHING OF GOD'S WORD SHOULDN'T BE DONE LIKE ONE WOULD FIRE A MACHINE GUN - RAPID FIRING FOR MAXIMUM DAMAGE. THAT'S NOT THE WAY A MAN OR WOMAN OF GOD SHOULD APPROACH THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL OR OF GOD'S TRUTH. GOD'S WORD WILL REPROVE AND REBUKE (AND EXHORT) AND IT ALL SHOULD BE DONE WITH PATIENCE AND INSTRUCTION.

REMEMBER JESUS TAUGHT THAT WE MUST EXAMINE OURSELVES BEFORE WE JUDGE ANOTHER. THIS "OTHERS ARE GREATER THAN ME" APPROACH IS IMPORTANT AS WE PREACH THE WORD. SOME PEOPLE RESPOND QUICKLY WHILE OTHERS SLOWLY. SOME PEOPLE GET THINGS RIGHT AWAY, OTHERS NEED ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTION. OUR HEARTS SHOULD BE MOTIVATED BY A DESIRE FOR PEOPLE TO KNOW AND BELIEVE AND BE CHANGED BY GOD'S WORD AND NOT BY SELFISH REASONS LIKE "WELL I TOLD THEM" OR "I PREACHED TRUTH, IF THEY ARE OFFENDED, THAT'S THEIR PROBLEM". THOSE AREN'T THINGS WE HEAR PAUL SAY. REMEMBER HE WOULD OFTEN GO SOMEWHERE, GET AN INITIAL REACTION AND THEN STAY FOR A LONG DURATION TO HELP PEOPLE HEAR AND UNDERSTAND. (OBVIOUSLY THERE WERE TIMES HE GOT REJECTED RIGHT AWAY TOO - THOSE WERE TYPICALLY TIMES HE WAS GRIEVED NOT CELEBRATORY).

THE ESV STUDY BIBLE NOTES THAT THIS LIST REPRESENTS WHAT *ALL OF SCRIPTURE* DOES AND ECHOES PAUL'S PREVIOUS POINT ABOUT ALL SCRIPTURE BEING PROFITABLE (CP. 2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17). IN OTHER WORDS, PAUL IS URGING TIMOTHY TO COMMUNICATE ALL OF THE TRUTHS OF SCRIPTURE AND NOT CHERRY-PICK. THIS IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT CONSIDERING WHAT PAUL SAYS WILL DEVELOP LATER ON, NAMELY PEOPLE WANTING TO FIND TEACHERS THAT WILL TELL THEM ONLY WHAT THEY WANT TO HEAR (V. 3).

2 TIMOTHY 4:3-4 — EARS THAT WANT TO BE TICKLED & SCRATCHED

WE'VE HEARD PAUL WARN ABOUT FALSE TEACHERS THROUGHOUT HIS LETTERS BUT NOW PAUL WRITES THAT THE DETERIORATION OF SOUND PREACHING WILL BE A RESULT OF WHAT THE PEOPLE WANT TO HEAR. PEOPLE WILL NOT WANT TO HEAR REPROOF, REBUKE OR EXHORTATION AND THEY WILL DRIFT TOWARDS PREACHING THAT GIVES THEM WHAT THEY WANT.

IF YOU HAVE AN ITCH, YOU JUST WANT TO RELIEVE THE ITCH! THIS IS THE IMAGERY PAUL USES ABOUT THESE KINDS OF PEOPLE. AS A RESULT OF THEIR DESIRE TO HEAR WHAT THEY WANT TO HEAR, THEY WILL TURN AWAY FROM TRUTH AND TOWARDS MYTHS.

SOME PEOPLE WANT *ONLY* ENCOURAGEMENT AND SOME PEOPLE WANT *ONLY* REBUKE. SOME PEOPLE WANT TO HAVE SOMEONE TELL THEM THAT THEIR SIN IS NOT EVIL WHILE OTHER PEOPLE WANT TO HEAR SOMEONE SAY THAT OTHER PEOPLE'S SINS *ARE* EVIL. SOME PEOPLE WANT TO HEAR CERTAIN BIBLICAL TOPICS SPOKEN OF AND NOT OTHERS, AND VICE VERSA. (EX: A SERMON SERIES ON BIBLICAL PROPHECY BUT NOT BIBLICAL MARRIAGE OR A STUDY ON FINANCES BUT NOT EVANGELISM, ETC).

THIS IS SOMETHING PAUL WARNS US ABOUT. WE NEED TO HEAR HIM. DESIRES ARE DANGEROUS DECISION MAKERS.

A WAY TO AVOID ONLY HEARING WHAT YOU WANT IS TO VALUE AND READ "ALL OF SCRIPTURE" AND HAVE AN EMPHASIS ON **EXPOSITORY BIBLE STUDY AND TEACHING**. AN *EXPOSITORY* APPROACH IS WHEN YOU READ THE BIBLE TO DISCERN WHAT IT MEANS RATHER THAN LOOKING FOR WHAT YOU WANT TO BE TRUE IN VARIOUS PLACES. THIS WOULD BE DEMONSTRATED BY READING ENTIRE CHAPTERS AND BOOKS RATHER THAN JUST VERSES WITHOUT A LARGER CONTEXT. WHILE THERE IS GREAT VALUE IN "TOPICAL" STUDIES WHERE YOU LOOK UP VERSES ON DIFFERENT TOPICS AND COMPARE AND CONTRAST; THE DOWNSIDE OF A TOPICAL APPROACH IS LACK OF CONTEXT. YOU CAN FIND A VERSE TO SUPPORT ALL SORTS OF THINGS. BUT WHAT DOES "ALL SCRIPTURE" COMMUNICATE ON A TOPIC? THAT'S WHAT A GOOD STUDENT OF SCRIPTURE MUST AIM FOR.

2 TIMOTHY 2:15 - BE DILIGENT TO PRESENT YOURSELF APPROVED TO GOD AS A WORKMAN WHO DOES NOT NEED TO BE ASHAMED, ACCURATELY HANDLING THE WORD OF TRUTH.

WHAT WE DO DURING THESE STUDIES IS WE GO VERSE BY VERSE IN CHAPTERS AND BOOKS OF THE BIBLE AND THIS MAKES IT VERY HARD FOR US TO SKIP OVER PARTS OF THE TEXT THAT WILL OFFEND, BE CONTROVERSIAL OR DIFFICULT FOR US.

2 TIMOTHY 4:5 - SOBRIETY

Q - WHY DO YOU THINK PAUL USES THE WORD "SOBER" IN THIS CONTEXT?

PAUL'S FINAL CHARGE TO TIMOTHY IS THAT HE WOULD PREACH THE WORD. IN ALL THAT TIMOTHY IS CALLED TO DO - PLANT CHURCHES, ORDAIN BIBLICALLY QUALIFIED ELDERS, WATCH FOR FALSE TEACHERS, TEACH ABOUT PROPER CHURCH ORDER, FIGHT FOR UNITY, ENDURE HARDSHIP, AND MORE - HE MUST NOT MOVE AWAY FROM THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY TO PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST. IN DOING THIS HE WILL "FULFILL" HIS MINISTRY - SOMETHING PAUL IS ABOUT TO DO HIMSELF.

AS A CHRISTIAN AND AS A CHURCH WE NEED TO HEAR PAUL TODAY. THERE ARE MANY IMPORTANT WORKS TO BE DONE BY GOD'S PEOPLE. THERE ARE MANY THINGS THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED AND CARED ABOUT. BUT WE HAVE TO KEEP SPEAKING THE GOSPEL. WE HAVE TO KEEP MEASURING OUR MINISTRY BY THE STANDARD OF THE MISSION. IT'S IMPORTANT TO PERIODICALLY ASK "HOW IS THIS _____ HELPING ME MOVE THE GOSPEL?" IS MY LIFE IN A STATE THAT ALLOWS ME TO BE "READY" TO PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL IN EVERY SEASON? WHAT ARE THE THREATS IN MY OWN WORLD AGAINST THE MOVEMENT OF GOD'S MESSAGE?

YOU KNOW WHO ASKS THESE SORTS OF QUESTIONS AND CARES ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT THE GOSPEL IS BEING SPOKEN? SOBER-MINDED PEOPLE. PEOPLE WHO ARE ALERT AND AWAKE AND AWARE OF THEIR SURROUNDINGS AND THEIR SOULS. THE LORD NEEDS MORE PEOPLE LIKE THAT.

AND BEFORE YOU THINK THIS CALL IS FOR THE SPIRITUALLY ELITE, OR PASTORS, OR FULL-TIME MINISTRY WORKERS - PAUL SAYS TO TIMOTHY "DO THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST" WHICH IS DIFFERENT FROM SAYING "TIMOTHY, DON'T FORGET YOU HAVE THE SPIRITUAL GIFTING OF AN EVANGELIST". PAUL CHARGES TIMOTHY TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS - WHICH IS WHAT IT MEANS TO "EVANGELIZE". TIMOTHY HAS THE SPIRIT OF GOD, KNOWS THE WORD OF GOD AND HAS BEEN TOUCHED BY THE LOVE OF GOD - THAT IS THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE WORK OF EVANGELISM - A WORK THAT IS CRITICALLY NEEDED TODAY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD ~~YOU~~ LIVE IN AND AMONG THE PEOPLE ~~YOU~~ ARE GOING TO INTERACT WITH.

THESE ARE SOME OF THE FINAL RECORDED WORDS OF PAUL. THROUGH THEM WE SEE WHAT IS ON HIS HEART IN THESE FINAL DAYS - TELLING THE WORLD THAT JESUS CHRIST DIED, JESUS CHRIST HAS BEEN RAISED AND THAT JESUS CHRIST IS COMING AGAIN - THE MESSAGE THAT CHANGED HIS OWN LIFE DECADES AGO. WHAT AN AMAZING WITNESS.