

2nd Timothy
Chapter 4:1-5
“Charged with Simplicity”

All scripture references are from the NASU unless otherwise noted

Calvary Chapel Fellowship of Enid
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Being a Christian that bears fruit day after day, month after month and year after year ... that's really been the focus of **this letter to Timothy**. A letter written from a Roman Prison cell and no doubt, the very last letter the Apostle Paul wrote before his own execution.

Paul lived the kind of life that he knew Timothy would also have to live in order to be a life-long Christian fruit-bearer. He'd dealt with the outside hazards that persistently threaten fruit-bearing ... the classic methods by which Satan attacks individuals and churches ... most often, through human agents.

Now, Paul deals with a slightly different twist on Timothy's ministry ... what he can, and should, be doing as a minister, as the pastor of the church at Ephesus. Not for him to be the protector of the sheep, but to help the sheep protect themselves. What he should be doing to help ensure that they too are life-long fruit-bearers.

So, let's listen in ...

Verses 1-2a: PREACH THE WORD of God!

If you wanna be a blessing to this world ... PREACH THE WORD!

If you wanna be a blessing to your friends ... PREACH THE WORD!

If you wanna protect your loved ones ... PREACH THE WORD!

But notice ... I didn't say anything about you becoming popular or wealthy ... because preaching the truth of the Word of God won't do either of those things. In fact, in general, it will do just the opposite ... but it is singularly ... the kindest and most loving thing that you could ever do.

It's kinder than giving away money.

It's more loving than an embrace or an encouraging word.

It's far more valuable than any sacrificial labor that you might undertake.

And it will outlast any contribution that you could ever make to society through education or science or politics.

Preaching the Word of God is THE most loving thing you can do for this world. And that's why Paul assigns it with such a solemn charge.

Look at all that Paul rests on it; God the Father, God the Son, the judge of the living and

the dead, the appearing of Christ Jesus at the ushering in of the Millennial Reign and the Kingdom of God itself!

“Timothy ... I want you to accept this charge to preach the Word of God as if, not keeping your vow would cost you God Himself. As if it would cost you the judgments and return of Christ. As if it would cost you the very Kingdom of God!”

That’s heavy!

Remember when you were a kid and you really, really wanted to be sure that that other kid on the playground was telling the truth ... so you’d say “Swear it!” and they’d say “Okay, I swear it”. But of course, you still didn’t believe them, so you’d say, “Swear it on your mother!” “Okay, okay, I swear it on my mother.” But the clincher ... the one that made it absolutely binding ... “Swear it on your mother’s grave!”

Q. But what is that compared to what Paul says here? This is a serious charge!

Q. And again, what’s the charge? – PREACH THE WORD!

Notice with me ... it’s not “Timothy, I charge you to preach from the Word ...!” Neither does he charge Timothy to “preach on the Word” or “preach about the Word”. No ... the charge is to “preach the Word!” Preach the very Word of God.

Proclaim exactly what God wrote; verse by verse, precept upon precept ... God’s way, not man’s way.

Back in **Paul’s first letter to this young minister**, he said ...

1st Timothy 4:13 **Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching.**

Not “Timothy, don’t forget to spend a little time on these issues” or, “Be sure and save a little energy for these things” or “Give some attention to these important activities”

No ... what Paul says is, “Timothy ... give your attention to these things ... not just some attention or some time or some energy ... but give yourself fully. Devote yourself to them; read the scriptures to the body, exhort the body to live by the scripture and then explain to the body the full counsel of the scripture.”

Q. Makes you wonder how so many could have turned away from the simple teaching of the Word of God ... wanting to be politically correct instead of eternally correct? Wanting to please man rather than pleasing God?

Verse 2b: “Preaching”, as we know, is for the unsaved. Preaching is the presentation of the Gospel; salvation through Christ Jesus ... offered to the lost.

“Teaching”, on the other hand, is for the saved. We preach the milk of the Word, but we teach the meat of it so that the saved can grow beyond infancy in their Christ-likeness.

And although Paul says, “**preach the word ...**” ... he goes on to say “**reprove, rebuke [and] exhort, with great patience and instruction**”. So, this exhortation covers a commitment to both preach and teach. The latter part of **verse 2** talking about teaching.

You don’t reprove, rebuke, exhort or even instruct, the lost ... those are things reserved for the saved. Those are things that bring about spiritual growth ... not spiritual birth.

- 1.** To “reprove” means to prove again ... or more specifically, to prove wrong again.

We know it when we’re wrong ... when we’re out of line with God ... we know it because the Spirit tells us ... He whispers in our ear. But sometimes we need a brother or sister to come along and show us the error of our ways from the Word ... to prove us wrong again.

- 2.** The next thing Paul lists is “rebuke” ... which literally means to forbid. So, once you’ve shown the believer the agreement being the Spirit and the Word ... the agreement that they’re wrong ... simply tell them to knock it off ... NOW!

- 3.** And lastly, he says “exhort” them.

The recipe of ministry by the Word is to show them their error ... tell them to stop the wrong immediately and then you exhort them ... which means to draw them near to yourself and console them. It means that you implore them ... beg them from a heart that genuinely wants to see them get it right.

One commentator said, “You pull them under your arm and sew up the hole from whence the wrong was excised.”

Then, in addition to telling us what to do, Paul also tells us when and how to do it ...

Q. The when? – Is in season and out of season!

Preach to the lost and reprove, rebuke and exhort the saved! Do it when you want to and when you don’t want to. Do it when it’s expected and when it not expected. Do it when it’s convenient and when it’s inconvenient.

Q. And the how? – Is with great patients and instruction.

Don’t just tell them ... show them, and if that doesn’t work ... tell them and show them again.

Verses 3-5: People just won't put up with it! They won't submit to scripture or spiritual leadership.

I don't know if anyone other than me remembers a publication from the late, Dave Hunt called "The Berean's Call", but I remember one in particular from a few years ago, titled, "Weaning Evangelicals off the Word of God". And in it, he pointed out all the ways that it was already taking place ... and its worse now than it was then.

But that shouldn't surprise us because it's a necessary and prophetically foretold step toward the end of times.

Before the Antichrist will be able to come on the scene and deceive people in mega-numbers ... first you've got to get the people off the Word of God. Especially ... so called, Christians.

At the time of the Prophet Amos, Israel was really at the Zenith of its power ... or at least it appeared so outwardly. The reality though ... was that inwardly, it was corrupt and idolatrous ... it was rotting from the inside out and it was into that background and culture that Amos was sent as God's prophet ... and it was to that group of people that God said this ...

Amos 8:11 "Behold, days are coming," ... "When I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, But rather for hearing the words of the LORD. 12 "People will stagger from sea to sea And from the north even to the east; They will go to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, But they will not find it.

The Israelites had been given an incredibly privileged position and status and all such blessings are sent by God as an incentive toward righteous living, but when the corrupt human heart responds to God's goodness, the result is often just an evil expenditure of God's blessings.

And that scenario reminds me of another country ... seemingly at the pinnacle of power, but inwardly full of dead men's bones ... it's called the United States of America. Another country where there's a famine for the hearing of the Word of God.

We have too many "seeker sensitive" and "user friendly" churches, watering down the Word of God. Too many in the pulpit are afraid to offend. Tweaking this passage and twisting that doctrine ... removing the word "sin" and euphemizing the scriptural description of Hell.

Churches that are painting black and white in various shades of gray ... all under the umbrellas of being "seeker sensitive" or "user friendly" or even, "politically correct".

Q. But are those things really all bad? They sorta sound like they make sense don't they? – Well God says in ...

Proverbs 14:12 There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.

Look with me, if you would, at **verse 4** and in particular, the word “myths” there. It’s muthos (moo'-thos) in the Greek and it means a partially true and usually logical belief that is contrary to divine truth.

Q. So what does the Word of God have to say about these ideas of being “seeker sensitive” or “user friendly” or “politically correct”? --

Romans 3:11 There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. NKJV

Q. But how can that be? None who seek after God? Isn't the whole idea behind being “seeker-sensitive” ... being sensitive to seekers? – Yep that’s the idea ... but the Word doesn’t tell us that seekers get saved nor does it tell us to be sensitive to those who claim to be seekers.

It tells us in **John chapter 16 (Verses 5-15)** that God sent His Holy Spirit into the world to convict the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment and then point them to Christ that they might be saved.

So, we don’t get saved because we’re seeking ... we get saved because we’re convicted of our sin and our need for a Savior. We get saved because God drafts us! And that’s not a Calvinistic statement. It in no way negates the responsibility of man to respond to the draft notice.

But being “seeker sensitive” in the modern use of the phrase, is absolutely unscriptural. But it is about what we should expect when man enacts his plans for the church rather than simply following the instruction book.

Churches like that are targeting seekers, but the seekers are not seeking God. More often than not, they’re seeking whatever they can get from God’s misguided people.

Q. So what’s the answer from a corporate level? – Preach and teach the Word of God ... then do it again!

Q. But ... won't that drive some people away? – Absolutely! Each and every one who’s not interested in being reproved, rebuked and exhorted by the Word of God and each and every one who’s not honestly interested in pursuing the God of the Word!

It’s always sad to see people walk away ... it grieves me ... even discourages me at times. It hurts when people visit and then never show up again.

But I have to be okay with that ... and you have to be okay with that too.

If we're going to be a part of a Bible teaching church ... then we've got to be okay with that because the promise of the Bible is that that's going to happen.

I once heard Pastor Chuck Smith explain it by asking this question; "If you received a letter from a loved one. Maybe someone that you'd sort of lost touch with over the years, yet someone that you cared about deeply. Someone that you were anxious to hear from. Someone you'd really love to catch up with. How would you read their letter when you picked it up out of the mailbox?"

Q. Would you start at the beginning of the last paragraph? – No!

Q. Would you skip around ... grabbing a half a sentence here and a word or two there? -- Of course not!

You'd start at the beginning and read that letter word by word, sentence by sentence and paragraph by paragraph until you came to the end. Then you might even read it again!

Q. And why would we do it that way? – Because common sense tells us that that's the best possible way to grasp the full message of the letter. That's the best way to understand what's being communicated.

Q. So why, pray tell, do we feel such liberty to skip around ... a verse here and a passage there, when it comes to the most important letter ever written? –

Perhaps I'm being a bit harsh in this statement, but I really think the reason topical Bible teaching or preaching ever became the norm ... is because it provides man with the liberty to pick and choose. It's simply more comfortable.

Now please don't interpret that as some sort of pat on the back for us ... it's not. It's merely a confession that each of us are susceptible to the temptation to be man pleasers. It's a praise to God for His Word and the order in which He gave it to us. It's to His credit and glory for His instructions.

Listen to ...

Nehemiah 8:1 And all the people gathered as one man at the square ... and they asked Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses which the LORD had given to Israel. 2 Then Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly of men, women and all who could listen with understanding, on the first day of the seventh month. 3 He read from it before the square ... from early morning until midday, in the presence of men and women, those who could understand; and all the people were attentive to the book of the law. 4 Ezra the scribe stood at a wooden podium which they had made for the purpose. And beside him stood [a group of priests and elders] 5 Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people for he was standing above all the

people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. 6 Then Ezra blessed the LORD the great God. And all the people answered, "Amen, Amen!" while lifting up their hands; then they bowed low and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground. 7 Also ... the Levites, explained the law to the people while the people remained in their place. 8 They read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading.

That's teaching the Word of God at an age appropriate level in the manner and order in which it was written. How simple! And yet, Paul says that that's exactly what the majority of people don't want.

It's what we all need, but it's not what the majority wants ... so there will be large groups that will congregate and, as Paul says here ... those groups will "accumulate" teachers who will tell them what they want to hear.

Figurehead spiritual parents who will give their kids hot fudge sundaes for every meal because that's what they scream for.

When Paul says that they will "accumulate" teachers, he uses the word [episoreuo (ep-ee-so-ryoo'-o)] and that's noteworthy because it means to pull others down upon yourself. These itchy-eared people are pulling down their hireling teachers upon themselves.

Obviously ... this is one of the dangers of the sheep ruling over the shepherd. It gives the flock the ability to accumulate for themselves someone who will tickle their ears with what they want to hear (**John 10:12**).

When the shepherd can be hired and fired by a vote of the sheep you've set yourself up for this end-times, prophetically-foretold, heretical disaster.

Conclusion: So, let me tell you ... I am grateful for each one of you. A small group of people, willing to hang in there. Willing to be shaped and molded by the Word of God week after week.

I'm thankful that you allow me, as Paul charges Timothy in **verse 5** ... to fulfill my ministry ... to simply preach and teach the Word of God simply!