

2 Timothy 4:1-8 (NIV)

1 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: 2 Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. 3 For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. **5 But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.** 6 For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

2 Timothy 4 – Paul’s Final Testimony to Timothy

A. Paul’s Final Testimony to Timothy.

1. (Verse 1) A Solemn Charge to Timo
2. **I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom.**
 - a) **I charge you therefore:**

Charge translates as a strong word from Biblical Greek It is also often translated as to *testify*. The idea is that Paul gave a solemn testimony to Timothy, testimony that Timothy must heed if he would be a godly person.
 - b) **Before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead:**

Here Paul describes the members of the court where he gave his own testimony, thereby making it more important.

 - 1) As Paul sat in his cold, damp prison cell, he understood there was a spiritual reality present that went beyond the walls of his cell. Spiritually, this letter, he gave solemn testimony to his young friend and associate and he did it in the presence of the God who will judge us all.
 - c) **At His appearing and His kingdom:**

Paul still believed in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. He had been in ministry for more than 30 years and his earliest letters mentions the return of Jesus. Now, so many years and experiences later, he still it with all his heart.
2. (Verse 2) The testimony: Preach the word!

Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

 - a) **Preach the word!**

Paul's emphasis on the word of God has been constant. There are some 36 references to the true gospel in this letter and some 17 references to false teachings.

1) This constant emphasis makes Paul's point clear to Timothy:

- *Do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord* ([2 Timothy 1:8](#))
- *Hold fast the pattern of sound words* ([2 Timothy 1:13](#))
- *The things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men* ([2 Timothy 2:2](#))
- *Rightly dividing the word of truth* ([2 Timothy 2:15](#))
- *A servant of the Lord must be . . . able to teach* ([2 Timothy 2:24](#))
- *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God* ([2 Timothy 3:16](#))

2) Timothy was not required to merely *know* the word or *like* the word or *approve* of the word; he was required to **preach the word**. The word of God must be *preached* by Timothy; it was to be the content of his message.

b) Be ready in season and out of season:

This tells us *when* we should be ready to preach the word. We should be ready *always*. We should preach it when it is easy and preach it when it is hard. We should preach it when the fruit is evident and preach it when the fruit seems invisible. We should just preach it.

1) There was once a Church of England pastor who was really loved God. When Jesus changed his life he started preaching the gospel to his whole and they all got saved. Then he started preaching in surrounding neighborhood. The other pastors were offended. They asked his bishop to make the man stop. When the bishop confronted the pastor the Bishop said, "I hear you are always preaching and you don't seem to be doing anything else." The pastor answered the Bishop, "Well bishop, I only preach during two seasons of the year." The bishop said, "I'm glad to know that; what seasons are they?" The pastor replied, "In season and out of season!"

There are 4 things we should do!

c) Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching:

In his preaching Timothy was to bring the Word of God to bear on the lives of his people. He was not to treat the word as if it were filled with interesting ideas or fascinating theories. He was to hold up the Word of God against the lives of his people and let God do His work.

3. (Verses 3-4) The need for the true preaching of the word.

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

a) They will not endure sound doctrine:

Timothy needed to keep focused on the Word of God because people, by their natural instinct, do not *want* God's revelation. They would rather hear what they want to hear – something to scratch their **itching ears**.

b) They will heap up for themselves teachers:

This reminds us that the most popular teachers are not necessarily the most faithful teachers.

c) And be turned aside to fables:

Once people leave the Word of God they often then embrace fantastic fantasies. When a man rejects God's truth, it isn't that he believes in nothing; he will believe in *anything*.

1) It is possible for many churchgoers to turn aside from the truth and to believe many fables:

- The fable that you must *earn* your way before God
- The fable that God only loves you when you are good
- The fable that you should walk around thinking of yourself as better than others because you are a Christian

4. (Verse 5) Be Careful and Fulfill your Ministry.

But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

a) But you:

This is a word of contrast against the people mentioned in the previous sentence. Though others turned aside to fables, Timothy was to be even more dedicated to doing what God wanted him to do. Their presence was to make him more dedicated, not more discouraged.

b) Be watchful in all things:

Timothy could not fulfill his ministry unless he kept careful attention, being **watchful in all things**. Every good shepherd has his eyes open.

c) Endure afflictions:

Ministry is just like life. There are **afflictions** to be dealt with. For some this is a disturbing thought because they thought that the ministry would be one beautiful spiritual experience after another. There are plenty of wonderful blessings in serving God but there are also **afflictions** to be endured.

d) Do the work of an evangelist:

This implies that Timothy was not particularly gifted as an evangelist but he still had to faithfully do that **work** as a preacher of God's Word.

Evangelism is an outside the church ministry.

- If a church doesn't learn and then give to others, it will become stagnant.

EX: The difference between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea

- Both are fed by the Jordan River
- The Sea of Galilee lets the Jordan River pass through
- It is a fresh body of water
- The Dead Sea has no outlet.
- It has become stale and stagnant. Nothing grows there.

e) Fulfill your ministry:

1) There may be many reasons why someone's ministry goes unfulfilled and each must be earnestly battled:

- Fear
- Unbelief
- The cares of the world
- The fear of man
- Criticism and discouragement

· Besetting sin

B. The Final Words from Paul: His Triumphant Confidence.

1. (Verses 6-7) Paul's triumphant confidence.

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

a) I am already being poured out as a drink offering:

A drink offering was brought before the Lord and poured out on the altar. It was one way to give God a sacrifice, just as an animal might be given as a sacrifice.

1) The idea of a **drink offering** is first presented in Genesis 35:14, where Jacob poured out a drink offering before the Lord as a sacrifice. In the Mosaic Law, drink offerings could be a part of sacrifice to the Lord ([Exodus 29:40-41](#) and [Leviticus 23:13](#)).

2) **Poured out** has the idea of a *complete* giving, with no reservation. The liquid is completely emptied from the cup, and totally given to God.

3) So Paul was **already being poured out**. His head was not on the executioner's block yet, but his heart was there. He was *ready* to make the ultimate sacrifice.

b) The time of my departure is at hand:

Paul felt that he was in the airport and his flight to heaven was ready to depart. He was just waiting for his boarding call.

1) Paul's exhortation to Timothy is even more meaningful because he knew he was passing from the scene and Timothy must carry the torch.

God's workmen pass on, but God's work continues.

c) I have finished the race:

Throughout his ministry Paul used the picture of the race and the Christian being an athlete running that race

([Philippians 3:12-14](#), [Acts 20:24](#), [1 Corinthians 9:24](#), [Hebrews 12:1](#)). Now he knew his race was just about **finished**.

2. (Verse 8) Paul's crown of righteousness.

Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

a) There is laid up for me:

Paul knew there was a crown waiting for him in heaven, and he was ready to receive it. He was certain of it.

1) There are two main words for **crown** in the New Testament. One refers to a royal crown and the other to the victor's crown. Here Paul referred to the victor's crown – the crown that was essentially a trophy, recognizing that one had competed according to the rules and had won the victory.

b) Which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day:

Paul envisioned an awards ceremony where he would receive the crown that waited for him. Paul was about to be condemned and executed by an earthly court, but he was also going to be rewarded by a heavenly Lord.

c) Also to all who have loved His appearing:

This promise is for us – *if* we will set our focus on heaven and on the Jesus who both walked the earth and now reigns in heaven, who is waiting to receive us.