

Paul's Charge

[2 Timothy 4:1-2a HCSB](#) Before God and Christ Jesus, who is going to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom, I solemnly charge you: (2) proclaim the message; persist in it whether convenient or not...

Intro:

For three weeks I will be discussing 2 Timothy 4:1-5 with you. We'll break the five verses down into three digestible parts. My purpose is three-fold:

1. I would like to give some direction to the congregation in selecting elders and keeping them accountable.
2. I would further like to give those who are, and those who someday wish to BE, elders some cautionary instruction.
3. Last, I would like to give you an example of a midrash on a specific passage. I generally follow the topical (or meforshim) pattern of preaching because that is what the Master and the Apostles did. However, in your personal study or in a more academic setting midrashim or exegetical studies are useful.

I want to give you a "heads up" however. This style of study or exposition can bring out a lot of meat! So, let's get our thinking caps on and see what Paul can teach us on the issue of the eldership.

Let's look at verse one.

[2 Timothy 4:1 HCSB](#) Before God and Christ Jesus, who is going to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom, I solemnly charge you:

Paul ends his instructions to his young elder apprentice in the book of 2 Timothy by solemnly charging him. The term here is not one commonly used today and before I go on I feel I must ensure we all understand what a charge is.

To charge someone is to instruct them authoritatively, as a judge does a jury. It also means to lay a command or injunction on them as a master charges his steward with the management of his affairs.

Before God and Christ Jesus. (Deuteronomy 13:1-4; Matthew 18:20)

This whole passage is based on our understanding that we are in the presence of God and of the Christ who is judging. We are often so keenly aware of the surrounding humans that we hesitate to reprove, rebuke and exhort. However, if we keep in mind that Yahweh Shaphat (God our Judge) is watching - waiting to see if we will stand for what is right - we may yet find the intestinal fortitude to speak out regardless of the personal cost.

- [Deuteronomy 13:1-4 HCSB](#) "If a prophet or someone who has dreams arises among you and proclaims a sign or wonder to you, (2) and that sign or wonder he has promised you comes about, but he says, 'Let us follow other gods,' which you have not known, 'and let us worship them,' (3) do not listen to that prophet's words or to that dreamer. For the LORD your God is testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and all your soul. (4) You must follow the LORD your God and fear Him. You must keep His commands and listen to His voice; you must worship Him and remain faithful to Him.

We sometimes get trapped in the idea that we must answer to each other. This holds limited truth for we ARE commanded to confess our sins to one another (James 5:16). However, it is to Christ that we must ultimately give an account, not to each other. We must also be conscious of the fact that Christ is present in a particular, peculiar, and special way when His children gather together.

- **Matthew 18:20 HCSB** For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there among them."

who is to judge. (Romans 6:1-2; Jude 1:4)

Those who like to partially quote the Master words "Do not judge, so that you won't be judged" fail to note that Christ Himself judged and is about to judge once again. They have gone so far in their desire to teach grace that they condone sin! According to their doctrine, it is okay to slander, gossip, backbite, spread dissension, lose tempers, and never say "I'm sorry. I was wrong."

- **Romans 6:1-2 HCSB** What should we say then? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may multiply? (2) Absolutely not! How can we who died to sin still live in it?
- **Jude 1:4 HCSB** For certain men, who were designated for this judgment long ago, have come in by stealth; they are ungodly, turning the grace of our God into promiscuity and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Paul goes on to describe these people as belonging to two groups:

...the living and the dead... (Romans 2:16; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 2 Corinthians 4:5; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; 1 Corinthians 11:29-32; Matthew 12:36-37)

The idea that Christ is coming to judge is one of Paul's recurring themes (Romans 2:16; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 2 Corinthians 4:5; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). However, here, Paul reminds us that Christ will not only be a future judge of the dead, but that He also judges the living.

The yetzer hara brings with it a wicked spirit of procrastination that makes it easier to think of Christ as being a future Judge than to think of Him judging us now. However, the Holy Scriptures are clear in that He is Judge both of the living and the dead. Judgment is not something reserved merely to some future, uncertain point in time.

As Paul taught in regards to the Passover meal:

- **1 Corinthians 11:29-32 HCSB** (29) For whoever eats and drinks without recognizing the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself. (30) This is why many are sick and ill among you, and many have fallen asleep. (31) If we were properly evaluating ourselves, we would not be judged, (32) but when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord, so that we may not be condemned with the world.

Judgment is being rendered both right here and right now as well as at the future Bimah Seat, on every word we speak or fail to speak.

- **Matthew 12:36-37 HCSB** I tell you that on the day of judgment people will have to account for every careless word they speak. (37) For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."

...by His appearing and His kingdom... (Ephesians 6:10-17; Philippians 2:25; 2 Timothy 2:3-4)

We must remember that we are not building a country club. Our church is not merely a social gathering (though it does have that aspect as well). We are soldiers conquering territory for the King.

- **Ephesians 6:10-17 HCSB** Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and by His vast strength. (11) Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the tactics of the Devil. (12) For our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world powers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens. (13) This is why you must take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your stand. (14) Stand, therefore, with truth like a belt around your waist, righteousness like armor on your chest, (15) and your feet sandaled with readiness

for the gospel of peace. (16) In every situation take the shield of faith, and with it you will be able to extinguish the flaming arrows of the evil one. (17) Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is God's word.

- **Philippians 2:25 HCSB** But I considered it necessary to send you Epaphroditus--my brother, co-worker, and fellow soldier, as well as your messenger and minister to my need--
- **2 Timothy 2:3-4 HCSB** Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. (4) To please the recruiter, no one serving as a soldier gets entangled in the concerns of everyday life.

We are warring with principalities, powers, and dark worldly forces. Does a military leader who is conquering lands for his King hesitate to reprove or rebuke cowardly or traitorous soldiers?

I solemnly charge you. How serious the tone! How important the message! We dare not allow ourselves to forget the gravity of our mandate as elders of Christ's church. Half of the people who have ever been alive in the entire history of our world are alive today and the majority of them don't know Christ! We must undertake our position and our responsibilities with the focused attention and consideration due them. We must keep in mind that *"Future heresy is an outgrowth of present error. Error indulged becomes error entrenched."*

The development of the apostasy that will be the hallmark of the last days can already be seen in the present deviation from the truth that is being foisted upon us in the name of "grace" and "tolerance."

Let's move on to verse 2.

2 Timothy 4:2 HCSB proclaim the message; persist in it whether convenient or not; rebuke, correct, and encourage with great patience and teaching.

Proclaim the message. (2 Peter 2:5; cf. 1 Peter 3:19; Jonah 3:4; Matthew 12:41; Luke 11:32; Matthew 3:1-2; John 1:29; Luke 8:39; Acts 9:20; Galatians 6:14; 2 Timothy 3:6; Jude 4)

In chapter three verse fourteen, Timothy was encouraged to "continue in what you have learned and firmly believed". However, apparently that alone is not enough because Paul now commands him to proclaim it to others – to speak out.

Plenty of people would be comfortable with the role of the elders being that of prayer and Bible study, leaving the more "practical" running of the church to those more suited for it. However, we must understand that our duty is not to merely live in ivory towers, thinking our lofty thoughts. We must proclaim the Word of God. Let us speak out while some are still willing to listen because they will not always be so willing.

The word "proclaim" here is the Greek word *kerusso* (Strong's #2784). It means:

- 1) To be a herald, to officiate as a herald
 - a) To proclaim after the manner of a herald
 - b) It always suggests formality, gravity and an authority which must be listened to and obeyed
- 2) To publish, proclaim openly: something which has been done

The translation "proclaim the message" is absolutely correct but we must understand it in its primary, etymological meaning; to proclaim before the public, and not in the weakened sense with which we postmodernists often understand it.

We often take preaching to mean "to deliver a moral or religious discourse of any kind and in any way." However, if that is the case, then offering a fable with a moral ending would be just as valid as the proclamation of God's divine will! Furthermore, that is, in fact, what we find

in many churches today. It is precisely in those kinds of churches that we find those who accumulate “tickling teachers”. They fail to understand what true preaching really is.

- Noah heralded – “God will destroy the world. Turn away from your sins!” (Pauley paraphrase 2 Peter 2:5; cf. 1 Peter 3:19)
- Jonah heralded – “Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” (Jonah 3:4; Matt. 12:41; Luke 11:32)
- John the Baptist heralded – “Repent for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand! Look, the Lamb of God, who is taking away the sins of the world!” (Matt. 3:1-2; John 1:29)
- The exorcised demoniac heralded – “God has done great things for me!” (Luke 8:39)
- Paul heralded – “Jesus is the Christ! Far be it from me to glory, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!” (Acts 9:20; Gal. 6:14)

What can we learn from these heralds? What should be our message?

1. Future judgment.
2. Repentance from sin.
3. Jesus as the sole source of salvation.
4. The proximity of the Kingdom.
5. Christ’s work in our lives. (But of course we must do this without sharing any illustrations from our own lives according to the Cult of the Critical!)
6. That we should not glory in or value anything other than Christ.

Timothy was told to never be afraid to herald the Word. Satan and his minions are characterized by their stealthy infiltration (2 Tim. 3:6; Jude 4). However, God’s servants must have an open and above-board habit of plain, blunt proclamation. It must be done as graciously and lovingly as possible, but the message must not be lost in the fuzziness.

Persist in it. The Greek word used here is *ephistemi* (Strong’s #2186) and it gives the image of standing over something or someone.

It is like a warrior standing over the prostrate body of his fallen foe, ready to give the death blow if there is another twitch. It is “follow-through”. It is continuing the fight when everyone else has fallen by the wayside. Stand ready to defend yourself. Stand ready to defend the Gospel. Stand ready to defend Christ’s church. Stand ready to fight off the evil influences that are overwhelming that brother who is opposing you. Don’t give up. Don’t quit.



Whether convenient or not.

First of all, preaching the truth is rarely convenient. There is rarely a “good time” to reprove or rebuke. We need to be ready to do what is necessary anyway. We must not hesitate out of a false sense of pity or out of a fear of men.

Second, we must be ready in the sense that we must properly prepare. Our arguments must be truly scriptural. Our approach must demonstrate “patience and instruction”. We don’t just barge in and lash out left and right, half cocked, unprepared and inadequate to the task. If you must take out one of the devil’s bunkers, first make sure you have enough grenades with you.

We’ll continue our discussion of 2 Timothy 4:1-5 next week.