



WEEK 5 ██████████
2 TIMOTHY
CHAPTER 4

¹ I solemnly urge you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus, who will someday judge the living and the dead when he comes to set up his Kingdom: ² Preach the word of God. Be prepared, whether the time is favorable or not. Patiently correct, rebuke, and encourage your people with good teaching.

³ For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear.⁴ They will reject the truth and chase after myths.

⁵ But you should keep a clear mind in every situation. Don't be afraid of suffering for the Lord. Work at telling others the Good News, and fully carry out the ministry God has given you.

⁶ As for me, my life has already been poured out as an offering to God. The time of my death is near. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful. ⁸ And now the prize awaits me—the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on the day of his return. And the prize is not just for me but for all who eagerly look forward to his appearing.

PAUL'S FINAL WORDS

⁹ Timothy, please come as soon as you can. ¹⁰ Demas has deserted me because he loves the things of this life and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus has gone to Dalmatia. ¹¹ Only Luke is with me. Bring Mark with you when you come, for he will be helpful to me in my ministry. ¹² I sent Tychicus to Ephesus. ¹³ When you come, be sure to bring the coat I left with Carpus at Troas. Also bring my books, and especially my papers.

¹⁴ Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm, but the Lord will judge him for what he has done.

¹⁵ Be careful of him, for he fought against everything we said.

¹⁶ The first time I was brought before the judge, no one came with me. Everyone abandoned me. May it not be counted against them. ¹⁷ But the Lord stood with me and gave me strength so that I might preach the Good News in its entirety for all the Gentiles to hear. And he rescued me from certain death. ¹⁸ Yes, and the Lord will deliver me from every evil attack and will bring me safely into his heavenly Kingdom. All glory to God forever and ever! Amen.

PAUL'S FINAL GREETINGS

¹⁹ Give my greetings to Priscilla and Aquila and those living in the household of Onesiphorus. ²⁰ Erastus stayed at Corinth, and I left Trophimus sick at Miletus.

²¹ Do your best to get here before winter. Eubulus sends you greetings, and so do Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brothers and sisters.

²² May the Lord be with your spirit. And may his grace be with all of you.

DAY 1 - MONDAY ██████████

PREACH THE WORD

2 TIMOTHY 4:1-5, ISAIAH 40:6-8, JAMES 1:19-21

Paul's message to Timothy here is clear, "preach the Word," but if we are honest, sometimes we hear those words and think, surely that message is not meant for me. "I'm not a preacher, a pastor, or a teacher, so preaching the Word must be a job for others." But the Greek word Paul uses here means to "proclaim the Word," so it's more like sharing or passing on the Word. We don't need a seminary degree or a ministry title to do that.

As a follower of Jesus, we are called to be prepared when the opportunity presents itself to share what we know to be true about Jesus and how he has worked in our lives. We often aren't sure how to share, we fear getting it wrong or don't feel gifted with eloquent words to share, but this misses the heart of sharing the gospel. People in your everyday life at places like a local coffee shop, office, neighborhood, ball field, or grocery store aren't looking for a sermon to convince or encourage them. They are looking for a light in the darkness, a kind word or smile, a caring relationship, and someone who shows up for them in a time of need. Once you establish those connections, the words of His truth will come.

We have a beautiful truth that needs to be shared. We know what a personal relationship with Jesus does for us and what it can do for every person we encounter; isn't that worth sharing? We have a light and hope for the darkness and despair; isn't that worth sharing? We carry the "good news" with us into every interaction we have every day, and that "good news" is worth sharing. It is a life-or-death message; it can bring such life and light to those in our world. There were many in Paul & Timothy's day clinging to a false gospel that didn't stay true to God's Word; the same is true today. So we have a responsibility as followers of Jesus and should feel a sense of urgency to share the true gospel message of Jesus and what a relationship with Jesus means to us with those around us every day. God's Word stands forever and can save souls, so go out and "preach the Word."

REFLECTION

Spend some time today thinking about how your relationship with Jesus has changed your life. Write down a few ways that you might share that with someone this week. Ask God to show you small ways to share His Word with someone this week, and be alert for opportunities to do so.

DAY 2 - TUESDAY ██████████

KEEP A CLEAR MIND

2 TIMOTHY 4:1-5, PROVERBS 3:5-8, JAMES 1:5-8, EPHESIANS 5:6-20, MATTHEW 7:15-27

Paul is urging Timothy to “Preach the word of God. Be prepared, whether the time is favorable or not.” We established yesterday that, as believers, we all have a call to share the gospel, but we have a culture that is not always open to what we say about faith, Jesus, or God’s Word. This is why the tone and posture of how we share God’s truth with people matters. Some in the church in Ephesus followed their desires and rejected the truth. They were drawn instead toward teachers who validated their unwise choices and said exactly what they wanted to hear. The same is true today as it is easy to look to voices in the media or online other than looking to God’s Word to guide our daily choices. As we aim to share with others, who might be straying from the truth, we need to note some important things in this challenge from Paul. He says, “patiently correct, rebuke, and encourage your people with good teaching and keep a clear mind in every situation.”

John Stott explains that Paul mentions three different ways of sharing the truth depending on the situation. There are three different approaches: correction is intellectual (addressing doubts or in need of convincing), rebuking is moral (addressing sin and the need to repent), and encouragement is emotional (addressing fears and giving hope).

We are to use wisdom and discernment to apply the truth that is relevant to the person and situation we are dealing with. When sharing truth with others, there is not a one size fits all. We don’t have an open door to be pushy, disrespectful, rude, or insensitive. Most will not be open to hearing what you have to say with that posture. We must be patient and gentle, not pressuring, manipulative, or controlling with the truth.

Stott writes that Timothy’s call is to “be ready at every opportunity, be relevant in his application, be patient in his manner and intelligent in his presentation. The harder the times and the deafer the people, the clearer and more persuasive our proclamation must be.” Not only do we need wisdom and discernment on how to share truth with others, but we also need wisdom and discernment to be sure we aren’t looking to teachers who tickle our ears and lead us away from the truth. God promises us wisdom when we seek Him, so ask for wisdom in your life and in sharing with others. Matthew 7 serves as an excellent reminder to us to be on the lookout for teachers who produce good fruit rather than following those who produce bad fruit.

REFLECTION

Where are the areas in your life that you are tempted to sway from the truth laid out in God’s Word?

Is there someone you feel has strayed from the truth in your life? If so, how could you use one of the three approaches mentioned to patiently and gently draw them back toward the truth?

DAY 3 - WEDNESDAY ██████████

A FUTURE HOPE

2 TIMOTHY 4:6-8, DEUTERONOMY 31:6-8, JAMES 1:12-18

Paul is sharing beautiful words with Timothy about his journey with the Lord. He has poured out his life as an offering to the Lord, fought the good fight, finished the race, and remained faithful. When we are pouring out our lives, fighting to run the race faithfully, it can feel challenging and, at times, impossible. When we feel this way, we can cling to the hope that Paul offers here of a future reward in eternity with God. We can lean on the encouragement that Moses gave to Joshua in Deuteronomy 31, "the Lord will personally go ahead of you. He will be with you; he will neither fail you nor abandon you." We can fight the fight, run the race and stay faithful because He is with us every step of the way, and there is a beautiful crown of life in our future. Paul and Moses knew something about faithfully walking with God that they were passing on to those coming behind them. It is worth the effort to stay close to Him; not only will it bring peace, joy, and comfort here, but also for eternity, so "be strong and courageous for God is with you."

REFLECTION

When do you feel most discouraged in your journey with the Lord? Why?

Spend some time with the Lord bringing what feels hard and discouraging at the moment before him. Meditate over Paul and Moses' words of encouragement today; let them bring hope to your discouraging places.

DAY 4 - THURSDAY

PAUL'S LEGACY

2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17, HEBREWS 4:12, MATTHEW 4:4

One of the most magnificent aspects of Christianity is the legacy we share, the way the faith is passed down from generation to generation. Not only is the faith passed down, but leadership and care for the church are passed on as well, with older shepherds handing off responsibility to younger shepherds. As 2 Timothy comes to an end, what we see is older shepherd Paul handing off the baton of leadership to a younger shepherd, Timothy.

For Western Christians, it's easy to have the mindset of finishing our course and then resting on our laurels, spending our final years in ease and comfort. So it is striking how Paul does it: there is no coasting to the finish line. He reminds Timothy of His responsibility—self-control, endurance, evangelism—and urges him to fulfill his calling. This is the passing of the baton.

Then Paul says these iconic words: "The time for my departure is close. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (vv.6-7). He persevered to the end, using the days God had given Him, even to the point of asking for scrolls and parchment so He could continue his ministry of writing to churches. Paul concludes by saying, "But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that I might fully preach the word and all the Gentiles might hear it" (v.17). He persevered because of the Lord's help and finished the ministry He was given to do by God. So he not only handed off ministry to Timothy, he exemplified how to do it faithfully to the end.

Paul says something else amid His encouragement to Timothy—he points to the reward for faithfulness, the crown of righteousness reserved for all who eagerly await the coming of Christ (v.8). To urge perseverance and faithfulness without a promise would be to call for exhaustion. But that is never what God calls His people to. This is the legacy of Christianity, passed from one generation to the next: keeping the faith and passing it on. One generation shows the next how to persevere and fight the good fight as we look ahead with joy and eagerness to the coming of Jesus so that we can be transformed to be like Him and receive the crown of glory as we sit at His side.

Written by Barnabas Piper, *He Reads Truth*

REFLECTION

How do we show those around us how to persevere and fight the good fight well?

What is a mark of faithful legacy? What steps can you take this week to ensure you leave a lasting legacy for those who come after you?

DAY 5 - FRIDAY ████████████████████

FAITHFUL TO THE END

2 TIMOTHY 4:14-22, COLOSSIANS 3:12-17, GALATIANS 6:1-10

At the closing of this book, we see Paul's humility and humanity on display. He has everyday human needs and desires; he is lonely, longs for companionship, and would like some comforts of home, his cloak, and his scrolls. He had been deserted by friends, opposed by many, and unsupported by those he considered friends, yet he showed them grace and forgiveness. After acknowledging his human needs and desires, he ends with acknowledging that the Lord has met him in his every need. This section of the letter is personal; we are reading a conversation between spiritual friends. These comments are particularly touching and special. Paul is reminding Timothy that walking with the Lord will be challenging but rewarding.

Paul shows in these final words that relationships will be challenged, but with the help of Jesus we can forgive and want the best for others. We also get a hint at how much Paul values his spiritual friendships and how much joy they bring him. Even when human relationships disappoint us, we need that connection and community. Jesus is the only relationship in our lives that will never disappoint us, and Paul knows this, but he also knows that we're not meant to go through life alone. Even through his own trials and hardships, Paul still poured into his relationships. The Gospel message was entrusted to Timothy by Paul, and he did the same for so many others along the way. He was faithful until the end.

The gospel truth we have to share is much more compelling to people if they believe we genuinely love and care about them enough to pour into a relationship with them. This is a message near and dear to Paul's heart as we read not only in the 2 Timothy passage but also in Colossians and Galatians. Let's learn from Paul's example that it is crucial that we pour into others in a profoundly personal way to share Jesus with them. As we close our time in 2 Timothy, consider this:

"Our God is a God of history. He buries his workmen, but carries on his work. The torch of the gospel is handed down by each generation to the next. As the leaders of the former generation die, it is all the more urgent for those of the next generation to step forward bravely to take their place. Timothy's heart must have been profoundly moved by this appeal from Paul the old warrior who had led him to Christ. We cannot rest for ever on the leadership of the preceding generation. The day comes when we must step into their shoes and ourselves take the lead. That day had come for Timothy. It comes to all of us in time." -John Stott

REFLECTION

Have you cultivated these kinds of spiritual relationships in your life?
If not, how can you begin today? If so, how can you go deeper in your spiritual friendships?

What would it look like for you to apply the words of Paul in 2 Timothy to your life going forward?

