

PREACH THE WORD

2 Timothy 3:10-4:8

Key Verses 4:2

“Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.”

Apostle Paul wrote his last letter, 2 Timothy, when his martyrdom was near. It was like his will and testament to Timothy, his dear spiritual son. His last words for Timothy were: “Preach the Word.” Have you ever thought about the last words you would like to give your beloved children? This is a question about what we see as most important in life. To serve the younger generation of today, we might try different programs or methods. But we need to see what is the most important in our life and ministry. Today’s passage exhorts us solemnly to refocus our calling. Let’s think about the words through the Apostle with three points in mind: What is the nature of the Word? Why should we preach the Word? How should we preach the Word?

What Is the Nature of the Word?

Read verse 3:14-15; ***“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.”*** Leading up to this passage, we see challenges Timothy was facing--false teachers and a godless environment hostile to the truth of God. Verse 14 begins with ***“But as for you...”*** In contrast to false teachers and godless people, Paul exhorts Timothy to continue in what he has learned. Here ***“continue”*** is the same word Jesus used when he said, “Remain in me” in John 15. Timothy is to continue or remain in what he has learned and become convinced of. What had Timothy “learned” and “become convinced of”? It was the holy Scriptures (15). And who taught him? Since Timothy learned it from infancy, “those from whom you learned it” probably began with his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice (2Ti 1:5). Later he learned the gospel faith of the Bible from faithful servants of God -Apostle Paul and his coworkers like Barnabas, Silas, Dr. Luke, and Priscilla and Aquila. Wherever these faithful servants went, they preached the Word of God. In this way, they shepherded people and helped them to grow as Jesus' disciples. Apostle Paul exhorts Timothy to continue in the faith and life of such godly people.

I am most thankful to God that I could learn the Biblical gospel faith and life from faithful servants of God. If I had not, I would have spent my whole life for worldly, worthless things. What I learned and became convinced of made my life truly meaningful and fruitful. I presume all of you would say the same. As ministers of Christ, again and again we need to come back to the Word of God and gospel faith we have learned and become convinced of.

Then what is the nature of the Word of God? Look at verse 15 again; “... **and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.**” Scripture means writing. The Apostle calls the Bible the “Holy Writings.” The Bible is holy—it is separate and different from all other books. In what respects is the Bible holy? The Bible is holy because it is the Word of God, even though it is written in human language. The Bible uniquely gives answers to our fundamental questions--where we came from, who we are, how should we live, and where we are going. It tells us who God the Creator is. It tells us what God’s plan of world salvation is. The answers to these questions shine a great light into human souls and drastically change our lives. Most of all, the holy Scriptures gives spiritual wisdom that leads us to salvation. What can be more precious than 'salvation' we have received? What do people need more than 'salvation'? When we humbly come to the Word of God, it enlightens us to know what a terrible sinner I am, what the Savior Jesus Christ did for me, and how I can come to God in repentance and faith to receive his grace of forgiveness personally.

Verse 16a says; “**All Scripture is God-breathed...**” When God breathed into man’s nostrils the breath of life, the man became a living being ([Ge 2:7](#)). In the same way, all Scripture is breathed out by God. So the God-breathed Word is full of the Spirit and it is life ([Jn 6:63](#)). The Bible was written by 40 human authors over a period of 1,400 years. Yet the one true God is really the divine Author. It has a unified theme—the kingdom of God through Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit breathed on each writer so that each word and sentence may perfectly conveys the message of God. The fact that God is the Author of the Bible puts immense authority and trustworthiness into the words written in it. God is invisible. But God himself speaks to us through the Bible. Through words, we communicate and develop relationships. Likewise, God has communicated and has developed relationships with humans through his Words. Abraham became God’s friend and an ancestor of faith through his faith and obedience to God’s Word. Throughout history, God has revealed his faithfulness to those who showed love for him through their faith and obedience to God's Word. When we come to the God-breathed Word, we personally come to know God deeper and deeper, our spirits are revived and we grow in an intimate relationship with God.

A great work of God arises when there is even one person who has faith in God’s Word. As you know, Dwight L Moody was an uneducated man. But he simply put his faith in God’s Word and believed that God will keep his Word. Here is an example of his preaching; “Have faith in God! Take Him at His Word! Believe what He says! Believe the record God has given of His Son! If a man told me he couldn't believe me, I should have a right to ask him if I had ever broken my word with him. And if I had not broken my word with him, he ought to believe me. I'd like to ask you, ‘Has God ever broken His Word?’ Never! My friends, He will keep His Word. Unbelief is not a misfortune, but is the sin of the world.” God used this one man who put his faith in God's Word to bring a great spiritual revival in America and the United Kingdom. When we believe and obey God’s Word, we experience God’s power and faithfulness. May God help all of us to believe the Word of God and teach and preach it by that faith!

Why Should We Preach the Word?

(1) We preach the Word, because it is the solemn command of God and of Christ

Read 4:1-2a; ***“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: Preach the word...”*** “Preach the Word!” This is a command, not advice. This is given in the presence of God and of Christ who “will judge the living and the dead.” This means that it is the command of God and of Christ Jesus. This charge is given also in view of Christ’s appearing and his kingdom. What can be more imperative than the command of God and of Christ Jesus who will come as the Judge and Ruler of the universe? This is why the ministry of preaching the Word is more important than anything else in this world.

Preaching is not only explaining Bible passages. Preaching means to proclaim the king’s words. In ancient times, a herald would proclaim a king’s message. Likewise, our preaching is heralding the gospel of our King Jesus. Before his ascension, the Risen King Jesus said, ***“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Mt 28:19-20)***. Jesus preached the Word from the first day of his earthly ministry until the last. He raised disciples by teaching them the Word of God. Jesus commissioned his remaining work to the church. The church exists to carry on this Commission. When we teach the Word of God and help our Bible students to obey His Words, Jesus promised to work with us to raise disciples.

(2) We preach the Word, because the Word leads people to Christ the Savior.

Paul said that the Holy Scriptures are ***able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus (3:15b)***. The Old Testament as a whole points to Christ the Savior to come. And the New Testament testifies to Christ who has come to save sinners. Jesus Christ is the heart of the Bible. Jesus said, ***“You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me” (Jn 5:39)***. God wants all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (***1Ti 2:4***). God waits for sinners to come back to him like the father who waits for his prodigal son to come home. When an ambulance passes all cars yield to it, for there is nothing more valuable and urgent than saving a human life. If limited, physical life is that valuable, what about the life of human soul that is eternal? The Lord said that a person’s life is more valuable than the whole world (***Mk 8:36***). Do you believe in 'hell'? ***Revelation 20:15*** says, ***“Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.”*** What can save people’s souls from eternal destruction? The wisdom of this world makes people foolish because of its darkness of sin. Only the Word of God has the power to make us wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. And faith is born through hearing the Word of the gospel (***Ro 10:17***). Where there is the preaching of the Word, there is the work of life coming from the breath of God. We should work like an ambulance to lead the perishing souls to Christ the

Savior. When we work like an ambulance, God will make way for us. We must preach Christ the Savior from all Scriptures, the Old and New Testaments.

(3) We preach the Word, because the Word of God is able to thoroughly equip the servant of God for every good work.

Read verses 3:16-17; ***“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”*** The Bible not only leads people to salvation, but also transforms their lives. *“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart”* ([Heb 4:12](#)). The Word of God convicts, corrects, and trains a person in holy living. As servants of God, how can we be thoroughly equipped for every good work? Ezra in the Old Testament shows us a good example. As a Jewish exile, Ezra had a deep sense of problem and broken heart for his time and people. What did he do? [Ezra 7:10](#) says, *“For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the Lord, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel.”* His first priority was to devote himself to studying and obeying God’s Word personally. Then he came to experience the power of God’s Word and could serve his people in a dark time. By the power of the Holy Spirit, he was filled with passion for God. Once he fell before God, even pulling hair from his head and beard because of the sin of Israelite leaders who had married heathen women ([Ezra 9:3](#)). Through his preaching and teaching, a national revival came. We have to do many things. As of first importance, however, we should make personal struggle before God so that we may be corrected and trained by his Word. When the Word of God grows in power within us, we are thoroughly equipped by the power of God for every good work

To raise disciples we make many efforts. Ultimately, however, we should have a conviction that only the Word of God can transform people and equip them for every good work. Deep Bible study should be our first priority and focus for both ourselves and our ministry. Deep Bible study goes beyond just trying to understand the Bible text. It aims internalizing the Word of God until Jesus rules our hearts and lives. For this it is essential to have time to meditate on the Word and personally respond to it. This is why we write testimonies based on our Bible reflections. We do this because our goal is to really listen to God and obey him. Many men and women of God throughout history made writing Bible reflections their habit for their daily spiritual life. Their writings still inspire us today.

A UBF missionary to the United States received God's light of life through Genesis chapter 1. When his family started a new chapter in 2004, the first Bible student was a high school graduate who could not read or write properly. The missionary believed the power of God’s Word and taught him the Word of Genesis he received. God touched the young man through the words of [Genesis 1:26](#). His change revealed the glory of God and moved the hearts of many. As disciples grew, the missionary helped them to write deep Bible testimonies until they accepted one Word of God. Based on their learning, he also helped them to prepare Bible study notes. Then they began to invite students and teach them the Bible. After 10 years,

now there are 50 dedicated disciples and seven married couples in his ministry. Their weekly leaders' meeting is filled with heavenly joy as they share the grace they received from the Word of God. This is happening through one missionary family who believes the Word of God, teaches it, and helps their Bible students to live according to the Word by faith

We learn that discipleship and growth in ministry comes from helping people to internalize God's Word and obey it. We should preach the Word and prayerfully help our Bible students to accept God's Word and obey it by faith.

How should we Preach the Word?

(1) Be prepared in season and out of season.

Look at verse 4:2b; **"...be prepared in season and out of season..."** The word "be prepared" refers to positive actions, making every effort. What does "in season and out of season" mean? It means all the time. We are to be prepared whether the time is favorable or unfavorable, whether it is convenient or inconvenient, whether we are welcome or unwelcome. The Holy Spirit works like the wind that blows wherever it pleases ([Jn 3:8](#)). When we are prepared with the Word of God and readiness, God can use us any time for his work.

UBF shepherdesses in a chapter that serves the most prominent university in Korea wanted to invite students of the Medical School to Bible study. During the day, students were so occupied with classes that they wouldn't even talk to them. So the shepherdesses changed their strategy and decided to go inviting students at night when students were leaving the campus to go home. The golden invitation time was 11 p.m., when school library closed. So they went to the campus late at night and even had Bible studies at midnight. In this way many disciples grew; some even became medical doctor missionaries and shepherds. Many said it was impossible to have a successful gospel work at that campus. But now it is one of the most growing chapters in Korea with 120 members. Often times we don't have faithful Bible students, even when we go inviting students diligently. But one thing is certain: When we serve one-to-one ministry in season and out of season, God sends his chosen ones to us and raises disciples.

(2) Preach the word with great patience and instruction

Preaching is not one-sided speech or teaching. It involves pastoral care. The apostle says, **"...correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction (4:2c)."** These days, it seems very difficult to rebuke and correct anyone. But we can do this with the Word of God. When we advise people by correctly handling God's Word and encouraging them, the Holy Spirit moves their hearts to repentance. We should do this with great patience and careful instructions through prayers. We should never do this when we are angry. When we are angry it is time to pray, not to rebuke or correct. We should notice the emphasis-- **"great patience and careful instruction."** This requires listening ears and carefully thought-out words spoken in love. [Proverbs 25:15](#) says, *"Through patience a ruler*

can be persuaded, and a gentle tongue can break a bone." Wow! When we serve with patience, love and prayer, the Holy Spirit breaks sins that are as hard as a bone.

Paul predicts that ***"people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths."*** (4:3-4) It is striking to see that the Apostle precisely described our time. Today many people think there is no absolute truth. They value experience and regard morality as personal preference. In their emptiness and darkness, they seek many humanistic and mystical teachings that cannot nourish their inner life nor solve problems in life. This postmodern mindset produces many Christians who try to build their spiritual life based on personal experiences rather than the Scriptures. In this atmosphere, there are many who mislead people through their heretical teachings.

Read verse 4:5; ***"But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry."*** 'Keep your head' means to be sober and watchful. Intoxicants are not limited to alcoholic liquor and drug. Spiritually anything that comes from the world intoxicates human mind. How can we keep our head in all situations? We can be spiritually sober when Christ dwells in our hearts through his Word. Preaching the Word involves hardship. In 3:11, Apostle Paul mentioned the persecutions and sufferings he had endured. And he said, ***"Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted"*** (12). Let's do the work of an evangelist by inviting students to one-to-one Bible study in all hardships. Let's also discharge all the duties of our ministry by shepherding God's flock of sheep and raising disciples.

(3) Preach the word to the end

As the end of his life was near, Apostle Paul wanted to pour out his life like a drink offering to God (6). A drink offering was wine added to a burnt offering; its fragrance pleased the Lord ([Nu 15:7](#)). Here we can see that Paul's inmost desire was to glorify God. Read verse 4:7; ***"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."*** Even when Paul was waiting for his martyrdom, there was no hint of sorrow or fear in him. Rather, he was like a joyful marathoner who was waiting for the award of a gold medal after finishing his race. Paul fought the good fight. He did not forget that this world is in warfare, and he was a soldier of Christ. He fought against the sinful nature in him. He fought against Satan who tempted him to live an easy-going life. He also regarded himself as a racer who pressed on toward the goal. He ran to win the prize for which God had called him heavenward in Christ Jesus ([Php 3:14](#)). Marathoners say they face a moment during the race when they are tempted to give up. This moment is called 'the wall.' Those who overcome the wall can complete the race. Athletes can finish the race overcoming the walls, because they are looking forward to the prize of a gold medal. But the eternal glory we are looking forward to cannot be compared with the temporary glory of a gold medal. Look at verse 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.” Can you imagine the glorious day when you receive the crown of righteousness from the Lord? Let’s preach the Word, looking forward to the glorious day.

Let’s remember the Lord Jesus who preached the Word, shepherded God’s flock of sheep and raised disciples and let’s follow him. Let’s also always remember His Command, *“Go and make disciples of all nations.teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”* There is life, glory and power in the Word. There is nothing more glorious than the grace and privilege we have received to be the messengers of our Savior and King Lord Jesus. May God help us preach the Word to the end, so that we may be triumphant like Apostle Paul.

P. Abraham Kim
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