

SECOND TIMOTHY

Chapter 4

Preach the Word

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, **and by his appearing and his kingdom: 2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. 3 For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, 4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. 5 As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. 6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Henceforth there is laid up 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 loved his appearing.**

4:1 *I charge you.* Paul states his charge to Timothy, aware that he does so in the presence of God the Father and of Christ, who will judge all men. He is also keenly aware of the twin facts of Christ's return and the coming establishment of God's kingdom in its fullest expression. Timothy was to view a charge so given as of utmost importance. (CSB)

Possibly recalling Timothy's ordination vow, Paul now summarizes the duties of Timothy's office by giving him this command. (TLSB)

Christ who is to judge – Timothy is to do his work mindful that the Lord Jesus on the Day of Judgment will appear again as the glorious king he is. From Him on that glorious day Timothy will want to hear the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant." (PBC)

Paul has spoken the charge, but Christ will judge Timothy's faithfulness on the Last Day. (TLSB)

appearing. Christ's return in judgment will fully reveal the kingdom He established by His suffering and death, in which Timothy now works as a pastor. (TLSB)

kingdom. Not an earthly realm but one ruled by Christ. (TLSB)

4:2 This verse contains the simplest summary of every pastoral duty and responsibility—administering the Sacraments, admonishing the erring, and comforting and visiting those in need—and all flow from the preaching of the Word. (TLSB)

preach the word – A preacher is a herald. A herald is vested with authority to proclaim publicly the official messages of a king or high official. (PBC)

be ready. Be ready in any situation to speak the needed word, whether of correction, of rebuke or of encouragement. (CSB)

in season and out of season – There is no "out of season" for the pastor. (PBC)

At all times. (TLSB)

reprove. Persuade by showing evidence (in this case, from the Scriptures). (TLSB)

rebuke. Speak God's condemning Law to the erring. (TLSB)

exhort. Comfort the penitent sinner with the Gospel. (TLSB)

complete patience and teaching. Literally, "long-suffering and doctrine." Doctrine (the teachings of the Scriptures) is the pastor's only tool for reproof, rebuking, and exhorting. Yet, doctrine must be taught with long-suffering, knowing that people will not always accept what is taught or that acceptance might take a long time. (TLSB)

4:3 *sound teaching.* It is sound or healthy in that it says what God wants said. It comes from Him, and it produces spiritual health. (PBC)

itching ears. Ears that want to be "scratched" by words in keeping with one's evil desires. (CSB)

Desiring to hear something new and entertaining. (TLSB)

teachers to suit their own passions. Teachers who tell them what they want to hear, rather than what God declares in His Word. (TLSB)

By looking around long enough and going from teacher to teacher they will find teachers and churches who say what they want to hear. (PBC)

4:4 *myths.* Ultimately, every false doctrine is a "myth." (PBC)

4:5 *sober-minded.* Aware and focused on the task at hand. (TLSB)

Be level-headed, keep a clear mind. A pastor must not permit himself to become confused or carried away in these situations. This will bring him hardship which he will endure.

Do the work of an evangelist. This is addressed to those the Lord calls into His service. (PBC)

Rather than being swept away along with those mentioned in vv 3–4, Timothy must faithfully pursue his service. (TLSB)

evangelist. Lit, "one who proclaims the good news." (TLSB)

4:6 *drink offering.* The offering of wine poured around the base of the altar (see Nu 15:1–12; 28:7, 24). Paul views his approaching death as the pouring out of his life as an offering to Christ (see Php 2:17). (CSB)

An allusion to the OT sacrificial system (cf Ex 29:38–41). Paul regards his eventual death (i.e., the pouring out of his blood) as an offering to Christ. (TLSB)

my departure. His impending death (cf. Php 1:23). (CSB)

A reference to Paul's death, which he believes to be near. (TLSB)

In this paragraph the apostle gives the reason for making his admonitions to Timothy so comprehensive and explicit. He himself was about to withdraw from the field, and so his successors in the work of the Gospel-ministry should always keep his example in mind: For I am about to be poured out as a drink-offering, and the time of my dissolution is at hand. As in Phil. 2, 17, the apostle here uses the term for making a drink-offering to designate his approaching death. He knows that he must soon die, that he must seal the testimony of the truth as preached by him with his blood. And still he speaks of his impending martyrdom with all the quiet confidence in God which knows no fear of death. His dissolution, his departure from this world, is at hand; his soul was destined soon to leave the body which had suffered so much in the interest of the Gospel. Death has not even a remnant of horror for him that trusts in Christ's death and resurrection. (Kretzmann)

4:7 In this verse Paul looks back over 30 years of labor as an apostle (c. A.D. 36–66). Like an athlete who had engaged successfully in a contest (“fought the good fight”), he had “finished the race” and had “kept the faith,” i.e., had carefully observed the rules (the teachings) of the Christian faith (see 2:5). Or, in view of the Pastorals' emphasis on sound doctrine, perhaps “the faith” refers to the deposit of Christian truth. Paul has kept (guarded) it. (CSB)

Could refer to remaining personally in the faith that God has given and/or guarding Christian doctrine against false teaching and error. (TLSB)

A true believer may rather call out with the apostle: The good fight I have fought, my course I have run, faith have I kept. The great warfare for Christ against sin and unbelief had engaged the apostle ever since his conversion. It was a continual, hard, and fierce battle, but he had persevered to the end, he had not given way one inch, he could claim the honor of the victor. The course, furthermore, which had stretched out before him through the long years, like the track before a runner, he had finished; he had reached the end of his life of faith. No matter whether he had often stumbled by the way, no matter whether he had often been on the brink of losing courage, the Lord had enabled him to endure to the end. He had kept the faith; he had not only been faithful in the work of his ministry, but, through the grace of God, he had held his faith in his Redeemer secure against all attacks, in all persecutions. (Kretzmann)

4:8 *crown of righteousness.* † Continuing with the same figure of speech, Paul uses the metaphor of the wreath given to the winner of a race (1Co 9:25). The crown of righteousness means the crown of glory which Paul expected to receive on the last day because of the imputed righteousness of Christ. (CSB)

Eternal life. Cf Rv 2:10. “The justified are due the crown because of the promise. Saints should know this promise, not that they may labor for their own profit, for they ought to labor for God's glory. But saints should know it so they may not despair in troubles. They should know God's will: He desires to aid, to deliver, and to protect them” (Ap V 242–43). (TLSB)

that day. The day of Christ's second coming (“appearing”). (CSB)

Judgment Day described in Mt 25:31–46. *loved.* A reference to those who lived by faith. (TLSB)

With this blessed assurance in his heart the apostle was able to look forward beyond death and grave into the glorious future of eternity: Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord will deliver to me on that day, the righteous Judge, but not only to

me, rather to all whose love was firmly placed in His manifestation. The apostle speaks so confidently, so cheerfully, as though he had death behind him and were even now about to receive the reward which had been promised to him. It is a characteristic of every Christian's faith that it trusts absolutely and implicitly in the promises of God, that the believer is altogether sure of his salvation. Of course, if the redemption of a man's soul depended upon his own works and merit, even in the most infinitesimal degree, this joyful confidence would be out of the question. But the true believer places himself altogether into the hands of the heavenly Father, knowing that no enemy can pluck us out of His hand. The prize and reward of grace is the crown of righteousness, the final declaration of righteousness by God, the final imputation of the righteousness of Jesus, by which we are free from all guilt and condemnation. This assurance is given to us before the throne of God, as the wreath was placed upon the head of the victor in the games of the Greeks. Christ, who will Himself be the Judge on the last day, will be acting in His capacity as just Judge in awarding this prize, not to works, but to faith. Since we shall appear before the judgment-throne of God with a firm reliance upon the imputed righteousness of Christ, it will be a merciful and yet a just judgment which will award to us the crown of righteousness. This is by no means a special privilege of the apostle, but, as he assures us, will be the happy experience of all those that have looked forward to the final revelation of the Lord, to His second advent, with the love that grows out of faith. All true Christians long for the redemption of their body, for the coming of their Lord to take them home. The words of the apostle therefore contain an earnest admonition to the believers of all times to be faithful and patient to the end, since the goal toward which they are striving will repay them a thousand fold for all the misery and tribulation of this short earthly life. (Kretzmann)

His appearing. Probably a reference to the Christian's longing for the Last Day; might also refer to Christ's incarnation. (TLSB)

4:1–8 Faced with the thought of his imminent death, Paul impresses upon Timothy the importance of carrying on where Paul will leave off, preaching the Word faithfully. We should not judge our pastors' preaching on whether they say the things we personally like to hear. We should judge preaching instead on God's Word. God's Word sometimes cuts like a knife when it exposes our sin. But after the Law comes the Gospel of peace, binding up the wounds inflicted by the Law with the sweet Gospel, which proclaims Christ's forgiveness for all our sins. • Make me an ever-ready hearer of Your Word, O Lord. Do not let me seek preaching that satisfies my sinful desires, but give me preaching that will continually return me to the forgiveness You have given me through Your Son. Amen. (TLSB)

Personal Instructions

9 Do your best to come to me soon. 10 For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia,[b] Titus to Dalmatia. 11 Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry. 12 Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. 13 When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments. 14 Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. 15 Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our message. 16 At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! 17 But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. 18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

4:9–22 Of all Paul’s lists of greetings and notes about fellow workers, only the one in Rm 16:1–23 is longer than this one. From his prison cell, Paul continued to coordinate the mission work. (TLSB)

4:9 *come to me soon*. Paul is now in prison in Rome. (TLSB)

4:10 *Demas*.† See Col 4:14. (CSB)

Paul’s previous co-worker. (TLSB)

deserted me. Perhaps Demas left the faith entirely or was overcome by fear of imprisonment. (TLSB)

Crescens. Mentioned only here in the NT. (CSB)

Galatia. Either the northern area of Asia Minor (Gaul) or a Roman province in what is now central Turkey. (CSB)

Dalmatia. Present-day Albania and a portion of Yugoslavia, also known in Scripture as Illyricum (Ro 15:19). (CSB)

4:11 *Mark*. John Mark had deserted Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Ac 13:13). After Paul refused to take Mark on the second journey, Barnabas separated from Paul, taking Mark with him on a mission to Cyprus (Ac 15:36–41). Ultimately Mark proved himself to Paul, indicated by his presence with Paul during Paul’s first Roman imprisonment (Col 4:10; Phm 24) and by Paul’s request here for Timothy to bring Mark with him to Rome. (CSB)

4:12 *Tychicus*. He previously traveled with Paul and Timothy. Paul probably sent him to Ephesus to take Timothy’s responsibilities, so Timothy could travel to see Paul. (TLSB)

4:13 *cloak*.† Possibly for protection against the cold dampness. It was probably a heavy, sleeveless, outer garment, circular in shape and with a hole in the middle for one’s head. (CSB)

Prisoners in ancient times depended upon the provisions given to them by their family and friends, rather than on the generosity of their jailers. (TLSB)

Carpus. Not mentioned elsewhere. (CSB)

Not otherwise mentioned in the NT. (TLSB)

books, and above all the parchments.† The scrolls were made of papyrus, and the parchments were made of the skins of animals. The latter may have been copies of parts of the OT and/or copies of his correspondence, as it was customary for writers of letters to retain copies, which were published later (e.g., Cicero and Pliny). (CSB)

books. Lit, “scrolls” made of papyrus. *parchments*. Scrolls made of animal skin. (TLSB)

4:14 *Alexander the coppersmith*. Possibly the Alexander mentioned in 1Ti 1:20. (CSB)

Perhaps the same man as in 1Tm 1:20; a teacher who rejected the faith and began working against Paul. (TLSB)

4:15 *message*. Gk *logos*, often translated “word.” Used in John’s Gospel as a reference to Christ. Cf Jn 1:1, 14. (TLSB)

4:16 *my first defense*. The first court hearing of Paul’s present case, not his defense on the occasion of his first imprisonment (Ac 28). (CSB)

The legal proceeding that led to Paul’s present imprisonment. (TLSB)

Here was another cause for deep sorrow which Paul felt constrained to register here: At my first defense no man stood by me, but all deserted me; may it not be charged to their account! It appears from these words that Paul had had a hearing, he had had one opportunity to refute the charges made against him. It was upon this occasion that he had a bitter experience, one which might have discouraged a Christian with less character. According to Roman law he was entitled to a certain number of witnesses or patrons, whose business it was to assist him. If any one might have expected loyalty from his friends, surely the great apostle was entitled to this consideration. But the opposite was the case. All the men upon whom he had thought he could depend absolutely had scented danger for their own persons in the proceedings and had deliberately deserted him. They were not strong enough in faith to be equal to the situation. But here also Paul suppresses all resentful and vindictive feelings, rather making intercession for the weakness of those whom he still believed to be Christians at heart, asking that this defection might not be charged to their account. (Kretzmann)

4:17 *so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed*. Even in these dire circumstances Paul used the occasion to testify about Jesus Christ in the imperial court. (CSB)

Even when all others abandoned him, Paul remained confident in Christ’s abiding presence. (TLSB)

message. Gk *kerygma*, “preaching” or proclamation of the word in v 15. (TLSB)

I was rescued from the lion’s mouth. Since, as a Roman citizen, Paul could not be thrown to the lions in the amphitheater, this must be a figurative way of saying that his first hearing did not result in an immediate guilty verdict. (CSB)

Could symbolize deadly peril or describe an accuser at Paul’s trial. Because of his Roman citizenship, it is not likely that Paul would have been put to death by lions in the amphitheater. Probably Paul was not declared guilty at his first defense. (TLSB)

As for Paul, he had a better advocate than any friend could have furnished him: But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, that through me the preaching might be fulfilled and all the heathen might hear; and I was delivered from the mouth of the lion. When he was forsaken by men, the Lord Himself was his Patron, whose support was worth more than all the assistance of men. He it was also, Christ the Lord, that granted to His servant strength in richest measure, thus enabling him to bear also this affliction with fortitude. And what is more, He gave him the courage to proclaim the Gospel-message in the very midst of his enemies. His defense of his cause, at the first hearing, had at least this effect, that he was given some respite, thus being enabled to gain time for a very necessary piece of work, namely, that of completing arrangements to have the Gospel sent out into all the countries of the known world. The mission of Crescens in

Galatia or Gaul and that of Titus in Dalmatia were but a beginning for the carrying out of plans by which all nations should hear the glorious news of their salvation through Jesus Christ. Thus Paul can joyfully record that he had been torn out of the lion's mouth, that he had escaped, for the time being, from all the perils with which his enemies planned to overwhelm him. It does not seem, from the entire context, that Paul had actually been condemned to be thrown to the lions, and this would not seem very probable. (Kretzmann)

4:18 *The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed.* Since Paul fully expected to die soon (v. 6), the rescue he speaks of here is spiritual, not physical. (CSB)

Once more the apostle voices his firm trust in the power of his Lord: The Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. This is putting the Seventh Petition into the form of a definite statement, which shows the nature of faith. From every evil work, from all the cunning, trickery, and power of Satan, from all the wickedness and persecution of the children of the world, out of all these evils the Lord will deliver and rescue His servant, so that, in the end, his enemies will be put to shame. Where the faith of Christ's servants is rooted and grounded in the Word of God, in the power of the Lord, there all the attempts of their enemies to harm them must come to naught. And if temporal death seems to have gained the victory and separates the soul from the body, the believers again are the gainers, for their inheritance in heaven is thereby given to them, they are kept by the power of Jesus Christ, their Lord, unto salvation. And therefore they gladly join in the doxology of St. Paul and give all honor and glory to Christ, who is God with the Father and the Holy Ghost, world without end. As often as a Christian thinks of the immeasurable blessings which have been imparted to him in Christ, he cannot refrain from voicing his thoughts in joyful thanksgiving to his Lord. (Kretzmann)

heavenly kingdom. Heaven itself. (CSB)

Eternal life beyond earthly death. (TLSB)

glory. Whether in life or in death, Paul continues to praise God's name. (TLSB)

4:9–18 Paul requests that Timothy visit him at Rome, confident that his fellow Christian will prove faithful. We should not hesitate to ask others for their help, particularly when our need is great. Probably they are more than ready to give us aid and require only to know our need. The self-sacrificing generosity that Christians show toward one another comes from only one place: the self-sacrificing love of Christ Jesus, who gave Himself fully for our salvation. • Thank You, Jesus, that You have given all things for me. Give me Your Holy Spirit, that I may be bold, both to serve others with self-sacrificing love and to ask for such love from others when I am in need. Amen. (TLSB)

Final Greetings

¹⁹Greet Priscilla^a and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus. ²⁰Erastus stayed in Corinth, and I left Trophimus sick in Miletus. ²¹Do your best to get here before winter. Eubulus greets you, and so do Pudens, Linus, Claudia and all the brothers. ²²The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

4:20 *Erastus.* Formerly, the city treasurer of Corinth. (TLSB)

Miletus. A seaport on the coast of Asia Minor about 50 miles south of Ephesus. (CSB)

4:21 *come before winter*. Travel becomes impossible during the winter months. Cf Ac 27:9–12. Also, Paul did not have his winter cloak (cf v 13). (TLSB)

Linus. Early tradition says he was bishop of Rome after the deaths of Peter and Paul. (CSB)

Eubulus ... Pudens ... Linus ... Claudia. Not otherwise mentioned in the NT. (TLSB)

all the brothers. Christians at Ephesus. (TLSB)

4:22 *you*. As at the end of 1 Timothy, “you” here is plural, showing that the letter was intended for public use. The word “your” in the first part of the verse, however, is singular, indicating that it was addressed to Timothy alone. In view of Paul’s impending death and the solemn charge he gave to his timid young friend, Timothy needed such encouragement. (CSB)

Though the Letter is a personal note that Timothy is to share with these others (v 19), “you” is plural here and most likely indicates that the Letter was intended for reading in the entire congregation at Ephesus. (TLSB)

4:19–22 In closing, Paul asks Timothy to greet the other Christians at Ephesus, whom Paul had earlier grown to love. There is no Christian who lives to himself or herself alone. We are a family, joined together in Christ! Timothy faces a difficult task, but he does not face it alone. Other Christians in the Body of Christ will shoulder the load with him. God has likewise given fellow Christians to us, whom we will find gathered with us in worship. Partaking of the Word and the Sacraments in the communion of saints, our gracious heavenly Father will lighten our loads and lift our burdens. • Thank You, Lord, for my fellow Christians whom I name before You in my prayers. Amen. (TLSB)