

THE CHARGE TO PREACH THE WORD

I. 2 Timothy 4:1-5

A. I ended last Sunday with 2 Timothy 4:7-8 (ESV) which says: "*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 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.*" **Paul finishes like we all want to finish. Our text today is the previous five verses...**

B. 2 Timothy was from Paul to his son in the faith Timothy. Many regard this letter as the Apostle's last will and testament. Paul pens this epistle from the Mamertine Prison in Rome. Nero will soon execute Paul by beheading. Peter will also die at Nero's hands and tradition suggests he was crucified upside down. Despite the martyrdom of these two apostolic pillars of the faith by the Roman government, the Kingdom of God kept advancing, not retreating. As for the Roman Empire, it no longer exists. But the Church, the Body of Christ, the earthly outpost for the Kingdom of God, is alive and well and advancing. The more of our blood that is spilled, the louder the ground cries out, and the swifter God's Kingdom grows.

C. 2 Timothy 4:1-5 (ESV) says: **1** *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: (Paul's writing to Timothy with the absolute authority and command from Almighty God!)* **2** *preach the word; (Preaching the Word is our main focus today; a charge to Timothy and to all those called to do the same.) be ready in season and out of season; (Preaching the Word when it's cool and when it's not cool. Preaching the Word when it's "legal" or "illegal." Preaching the Word when people are eager to hear it or when they turn a deaf ear to it. Preaching the Word when God empowers it by His Spirit to regenerate and transform hearts or when it's mocked, ridiculed, and rejected. And with it we will...)* *reprove, rebuke, and exhort, (OVs correct, confront, convince, refute, warn, challenge, encourage, and comfort) with complete patience and teaching.* **3** *For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching (doctrine), 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. (i.e. 'Preach the Word until you drop!')*

D. So from these pulpits, with sermons short or long; with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs; with mouths and fingers, pens or keyboards; with essays and articles and exegetical commentaries, in giving counsel or in sending prayer requests; with Communion or Baptisms, Weddings or Funerals; indoors or outdoors or in-between doors, we will *Preach* the Word of God...

E. When we say we will preach the Word, narrowly we mean the Good News of Jesus Christ as Savior & Lord. More broadly, we mean what Paul called *the Whole Counsel of God*. That means God's Word as it pertains to all things, big and small, far and wide, up and down and all around. WCF puts *the whole counsel* of God this way: "All which are given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life."

F. Albert Baird Cummins (1850-1926 / Iowa politician & US Senator) made this astute observation: "The empire of Caesar is gone; the legions of Rome are smoldering in the dust; the avalanches of Napoleon hurled upon Europe have melted away, the prince of the pharaohs is fallen; the pyramids they raised to be their tombs are sinking every day in the desert sands; Tyre is a rock for bleaching fisherman's nets; Sidon has scarcely left a wreck behind; but the Word of God still survives: All things that threatened to extinguish it have only aided it; and it proves every day how transient is the noblest monument that men can build, and how enduring is the least word that God has spoken."

G. Consider this: the Word we preach is the same Word of God that's been preached for millenniums! It's the same Word being preached around the world to this day. It's written for believers here, for sure, but also for believers in China and Russia; for believers in Africa, Europe, Asia, and South America; for believers in Israel but also believers in Iran, Iraq, and throughout the Middle East. The Bible is all about God and it was written for His people from every nation, tribe, tongue, and people group. It's power and transcultural relevancy is for every child of God.

H. Jeremiah 15:16 (KJV) was written during Judah's downfall, when Babylon invaded and Jerusalem was laid in ruins. With exile and captivity unfolding, the weeping prophet cried to God: *16 Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by Thy name, O LORD God of hosts.*

I. Our task as shepherds is to feed and care for God's sheep. You! The primary way we do that is through the preaching of God's Word. But if your food-intake is merely a weekly, biweekly, or occasional sermon, you may be malnourished. There's a reason why we send out additional Scriptures each week, lots of bonus rations for your spiritual nourishment. There's a reason why we encourage you to have daily devotions--praying and reading your Bibles each day. It's why we commend books to you to read which illuminate what the Scriptures have said and how to apply them to your lives. Spiritually we don't want you looking gaunt, depleted, skeletal refugees, limping about in nothing but skin & bones.

J. All our messages, our preaching of the Word, are intended to lead to the cross, the place where Jesus Christ took on our sins, suffered the punishment for them, and died. He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. The Scriptures are how we know! But just as our messages journey to the cross, we make sure they also journey from the cross. That because of the blood-bought redemption won for us there, we go forth so that others too will be redeemed, introducing others to the King of a Kingdom that will never pass away.

K. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (AMP) takes us home with the reminder of *WHY* we're charged to preach the Word: *16 All Scripture is God-breathed [given by divine inspiration] and is profitable for instruction, for conviction [of sin], for correction [of error and restoration to obedience], for training in righteousness [learning to live in conformity to God's will, both publicly and privately—behaving honorably with personal integrity and moral courage]; 17 so that the man of God may be complete and proficient, outfitted and thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

*** Close with Prayer...**

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

2 Timothy 4:1-5 (ESV)

1 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.

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Quote by Albert Baird Cummins

"The empire of Caesar is gone; the legions of Rome are smoldering in the dust; the avalanches of Napoleon hurled upon Europe have melted away, the prince of the pharaohs is fallen; the pyramids they raised to be their tombs are sinking every day in the desert sands; Tyre is a rock for bleaching fisherman's nets; Sidon has scarcely left a wreck behind; but the Word of God still survives: All things that threatened to extinguish it have only aided it; and it proves every day how transient is the noblest monument that men can build, how enduring is the least word that God has spoken."

- Albert Baird Cummins (1850-1926) was American lawyer and politician. He was the 18th Governor of Iowa elected to three consecutive terms and U.S. Senator for Iowa serving for 18 years.

Video Clips & Important Articles

Preach the Word, For the Time of My Departure Has Come - John Piper

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wAXX7FNTV-4>

What Does it Mean to Preach the Whole Counsel of God? - Dr Julius Kim

<https://www.wscal.edu/resource-center/what-does-it-mean-to-preach-the-whole-counsel-of-god>

What Does It Mean to Preach the Whole Counsel of God? - Justin Taylor

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/what-does-it-mean-to-preach-the-whole-counsel-of-god/>

What is the Whole Counsel of God? - GotQuestions.org
<https://www.gotquestions.org/whole-counsel-of-God.html>

Seeing Truth Clearly (2 Timothy 4:1-8) - Skip Heitzig
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wb1IOGWGMTs>

Bonus Rations

Hebrews 4:12 (NASB)

12 For the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

2 Timothy 3:10-17 (NIV)

10 You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, **11** persecutions, sufferings--what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. **12** In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, **13** while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. **14** But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, **15** and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. **16** All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, **17** so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Acts 20:17-32 (ESV)

17 Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him. **18** And when they came to him, he said to them: "You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, **19** serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews; **20** how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, **21** testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. **22** And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, **23** except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. **24** But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. **25** And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again. **26** Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, **27** for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. **28** Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you

overseers, to care for the church of God, which He obtained with His own blood. **29** I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; **30** and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. **31** Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. **32** And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

Quote by John Wesley

"I now propose short, clear, and strong arguments prove the divine inspiration of the holy Scriptures. The Bible must be the invention either (1) of good men or angels, (2) of bad men or devils, or (3) of God. It could not be the invention of good men or angels; they neither would nor could make a book, and tell lies all the time they were writing it, saying, *"Thus says the Lord,"* when it was their own invention. It could not be the invention of bad men or devils; for they would not make a book which commands all duty, forbids all sin, and condemns their souls to hell to all eternity. Therefore, I draw this conclusion, that the Bible must be given by divine inspiration."

Quote by Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

"We all therefore have to face this ultimate and final question: Do we accept the Bible as the Word of God, as the sole authority in all matters of faith and practice, or do we not? Is the whole of my thinking governed by Scripture, or do I come with my reason and pick and choose out of Scripture and sit in judgment upon it, putting myself and modern knowledge forward as the ultimate standard and authority? The issue is crystal clear. Do I accept Scripture as a revelation from God, or do I trust to speculation, human knowledge, human learning, human understanding and human reasons. Or, putting it still more simply, do I pin my faith to, and subject all my thinking to, what I read in the Bible? Or do I defer to modern knowledge, to modern learning, to what people think today, to what we know at this present time which was not known in the past? It is inevitable that we occupy one or the other of those two positions."

Quote by Herschel Hobbs

"The Bible contains truth found nowhere else. Human reason may discover certain truths about God. But the revealed truth of the Bible exceeds these so as to defy comparison. One may exhaust the meaning of the contents of other books, but not that of the Bible."

- Herschel H. Hobbs (1907-1995) was one of the leading Christian communicators of the twentieth century. He served as pastor of First Baptist Church in Oklahoma City for nearly twenty-five years and also wrote or edited 147 books and Bible commentaries.

Quote by Robert Plummer

"The canon is not an authorized collection of writings (in that the church conferred its authority or approval upon a list of books). Rather, the canon is a collection of authoritative writings... that have an inherent authority as works uniquely inspired by God. Canonization is the process of recognizing that inherent authority, not bestowing it from an outside source."

- Robert L. Plummer is professor of New Testament Interpretation at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY and serves as an elder at Sojourn Community Church.

Quote by Salmon P. Chase

"There came a time in my life when I doubted the divinity of the Scriptures, and I resolved as a lawyer and a judge I would try the Book as I would try anything in the courtroom, taking evidence for and against. It was a long, serious and profound study and using the same principles of evidence in this religious matter as I always do in secular matters, I have come to the decision that the Bible is a supernatural Book, that it has come from God, and that the only safety for the human race is to follow its teachings."

- Salmon Portland Chase (1808-1873) was a U.S. politician and jurist who served as the sixth Chief Justice of the United States. He also served as the 23rd Governor of O

Quote by Thomas Carlyle

"The Bible is the truest utterance that ever came by alphabetic letters from the soul of man, through which, as through a window divinely opened, all men can look into the stillness of eternity, and discern in glimpses their far-distant, long-forgotten home."

- Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) was a Scottish philosopher, satirical writer, essayist, translator, historian, mathematician, and teacher.

Quote by Charles Colson

"The Bible--banned, burned, beloved. More widely read, more frequently attacked than any other book in history. Generations of intellectuals have attempted to discredit it, dictators of every age have outlawed it and executed those who read it. Yet soldiers carry it into battle believing it more powerful than their weapons. Fragments of it smuggled into solitary prison cells have transformed ruthless killers into gentle saints."

Quote by Adrian Rogers

"It is better to be divided by truth than to be united in error. It is better to speak the truth that hurts and then heals, than falsehood that comforts and then kills. Let me tell you something, friend, it is not love and it is not friendship if we fail to declare the whole counsel of God. It is better to be hated for telling the truth, than to be loved for telling a lie. It is impossible to find anyone in the Bible who was a power for God who did not have enemies and was not hated. It's better to stand alone with the truth, than to be wrong with a multitude. It is better to ultimately succeed with the truth than to temporarily succeed with a lie. There is only one Gospel and Paul said, 'If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed'."

Quote by Charles Spurgeon

"The motto of all true servants of God must be, 'We preach Christ; and Him crucified.' A sermon without Christ in it is like a loaf of bread without any flour in it. No Christ in your sermon, sir? Then go home, and never preach again until you have something worth preaching."

Quote by Charles Spurgeon

“There is an infinite majesty about every line of Scripture, but especially about that part of Scripture in which the Lord reveals Himself and His glorious plan of saving grace in the person of His dear Son Jesus Christ.”

Quote by Billy Graham

“When we preach or teach the Scriptures, we open the door for the Holy Spirit to do His work. God has not promised to bless oratory or clever preaching. He has promised to bless His Word.”

Quote by Steven J. Lawson

“It matters to God what is preached. And it matters to Him how it is preached. No man is free to preach whatever and however he so chooses.”

Quote by John MacArthur

“A failure to preach Scripture redirects people from a God-centered perspective to a man-centered perspective. It tends to undermine confidence... in Scripture.”

Quote by Alistair Begg

“Unfortunately, preachers who distort God’s Word are all too common today. Sometimes this springs from a sincere desire to soften hard hearts, but hearts aren’t changed by compromise.”

Quote by C.S. Lewis

"A man who first tried to guess ‘what the public wants,’ and then preached that as Christianity because the public wants it, would be a pretty mixture of fool and knave.”

Quote by David Helm

“Some preachers use the Bible the way a drunk uses a lamppost--more for support than for illumination.”

Quote by John Flavel

"The Scriptures teach us the best way of living, the noblest way of suffering, and the most comfortable way of dying"

- John Flavel (1630-1691) was an English Presbyterian clergyman, puritan, and author.

Quote by Samuel James

“‘Doctrine divides, Jesus unites’ may be a catchy slogan, but it’s actually nonsense. Theology is simply what happens when thinking carefully and deeply about what God has told us in Scripture. Doctrine is not a stumbling block but a rock solid foundation on which to base our hearts and minds. Jesus says that true worshipers worship in “spirit and in truth.” That means that in order for Christian readers to truly worship God they must think truthfully about Him, and that means doing theology.”

Quote by Rosaria Butterfield

"If God is the Creator of all things, and if the Bible has His seal of truth and power, then the Bible has the right to interrogate my life and culture, and not the other way around."

The Whole Counsel of God - Westminster Confession

"Under the name of Holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testament, which are these: etc... All which are given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life. The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture; unto which nothing at any time is to be added whether by new revelations of the Spirit or traditions of men."

- Westminster Confession, Chapter 1, section VI, 1646.

The Whole Counsel of God - The ESV Study Bible

The whole counsel of God refers to the entirety of God's redemptive plan unfolded in Scripture. Even though parts of God's Word were unpopular or difficult, Paul did not omit any of them in his preaching. In refusing to pass over teachings that might have offended some, Paul gave a courageous example that is a model for all who would teach God's Word after him.

- Theological Note on Acts 20:27, *The ESV Study Bible*, Crossway, p. 2130.

The Whole Counsel of God - The Reformation Study Bible

Whole Counsel of God: The revelation of God culminating in His Son, Jesus Christ. Paul in his ministry to the Ephesians, did not suppress any truths of the gospel, "anything that was profitable" to his hearers (v. 20), but preached the full gospel to Jew and Gentile. Throughout his ministry, he always uses tact and discretion but never compromises the good news.

- Theological note on Acts 20:27, *The Reformation Study Bible*, Reformation Trust, p. 1955.

Rev. F. Kilvert on the Whole Counsel of God

"To inquire what is meant by, the *whole counsel of God*? And this inquiry need not detain us long. The concurrent sense of the most eminent commentators seems to fix it to the meaning of the whole compass of Christian doctrine--the entire system of revealed truth."

- By Rev. F. Kilvert, M.A., Sermon: The Whole Counsel of God, 1840.

Charles Spurgeon on Paul and the Whole Counsel of God

"1. In the first place, THE APOSTLE'S WORD AT PARTING: "I call you to record I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." The first thing that strikes us is the declaration of the apostle concerning *the doctrines he had preached*. He had preached ALL the counsel of God. By which I think we are to understand that he had given to his people the entire gospel. He had not dwelt upon some one doctrine of it, to the exclusion of the rest; but it had been his honest endeavour to bring out every truth according to the analogy of faith. He had not magnified one doctrine into a mountain, and then diminished another into a molehill; but he had endeavoured to present all blended together, like the colours in the rainbow, as one harmonious and glorious whole. Of course, he did not claim for himself any infallibility as a man, although as an inspired man he was without error in his writings. He had, doubtless, sins to confess in private, and faults to bemoan God. He had, doubtless, sometimes failed to put a truth as

clearly as he could have wished, when preaching the Word; he had not always been earnest as he could desire; but at least he could claim this, that he had not willfully kept back a single part of the truth as it is in Jesus. Now, I must bring down the apostle's saying to these modern times; and I take it, if any one of us would clear our conscience by delivering the whole counsel of God, we must take care that we preach in the first place the *doctrines of the gospel*. We ought to declare the grand doctrine of the Father's love towards His people from before all worlds. His sovereign choice of them, His covenant purposes concerning them, and His immutable promises to them, must all be uttered with trumpet tongue. Coupled with this the true evangelist must never fail to set forth the beauties of the person of Christ, the glory of His offices, the completeness of His work, and above all, the efficacy of His blood. Whatever we omit, this must be in the most forcible manner proclaimed again and again. That is no gospel which has not Christ in it, and the modern idea of preaching THE TRUTH instead of Christ, is a wicked device of Satan. Nor is this all, for as there are Three Persons in the Godhead, we must be careful that they all have due honour in our ministry. The Holy Spirit's work in regeneration, in sanctification and in perseverance, must be always magnified from our pulpit. Without His power our ministry is a dead letter, and we cannot expect His arm to be made bare unless we honour Him day-by-day."

- Charles H. Spurgeon, Sermon: "*The Minister's Farewell*," # 289, Dec. 11, 1859.