

## **THE PASTORAL EPISTLES: GOD'S DIRECTIVES FOR HIS UNDERSHEPHERDS**

### **III. II Timothy: Church Ministry Amid Hardship**

#### **K. God's Motivating Directive For Messengers Facing Apostasy**

**(2 Timothy 4:1-8)**

#### **I. Introduction**

- A. We increasingly hear of the departure of pastors from expounding Scripture and a waning spiritual vitality in churches. In such a time, pastors and teachers can easily be tempted to cut back or cease their ministry efforts.
- B. Actually, nothing could be further from the truth: 2 Timothy 4:1-8 reveals that such a time requires that God's messengers faithfully fulfill their calling from God. We thus view this passage for our insight and edification:

#### **II. God's Motivating Directive For Messengers Facing Apostasy, 2 Timothy 4:1-8.**

- A. God wants His messengers to view their calling as of the utmost importance, for Paul's charge in 2 Timothy 4:1 that Timothy minister was as "weighty" as one could make it: he directed Timothy in the name of God and Christ in view of God's coming judgment of the living and dead and Christ's return and establishment of His Messianic Kingdom to minister as God's messenger. (*Bible Know. Com., N. T.*, p. 757)
- B. The core function of Timothy's ministry was to "preach the Word," and we explain (2 Timothy 4:2):
  - 1. Paul stated that Timothy was to preach the **Word** (2 Timothy 4:2a), that is, the ***Bible's CONTENT!***
  - 2. Timothy was to do this "in season, out of season," whether his hearers welcomed or did not welcome the Word, 2 Timothy 4:2b. (Wm. Hendriksen, *Expos. of the Pastoral Epistles* (NTC), 1974, p. 310)
  - 3. This preaching was to correct those who erred (2 Timothy 2:25), to rebuke those who sinned (1 Timothy 5:20; 2 Timothy 3:16; Titus 1:13; 2:15) and to encourage the upright, 2 Timothy 4:2c; *Ibid.*, p. 758.
  - 4. The temperament Timothy was to have in his preaching was to be characterized by "great patience and careful instruction," 2 Timothy 4:2d NIV; *Ibid.* Since he was to make giving the **content** of God's Word his focus, use of great patience and careful teaching would highlight that **content!** (Hebrews 4:12-13)
- C. The reasons God's messengers were to view their calling as of utmost importance and thus preach God's Word this way is explained in terms of the huge issues that are at stake throughout Church History, 2 Timothy 4:3-8:
  - 1. First, many people would become apostate in Church History, departing from Scripture truth, what would result in their facing God's judgment and their eternal loss of reward, 2 Timothy 4:3-4 with 4:1:
    - a. Timothy's need to proclaim the Word was so necessary in view of the fact that many people would cease to tolerate sound or healthy Bible content to which they had been exposed, 2 Timothy 4:3a. (*Ibid.*)
    - b. Instead, seeking to fulfill their own lusts, they would seek out teachers "who would tell them what they wanted to hear rather than face them with the truth (cf. Rom. 1:18-32)," 2 Timothy 4:3b; *Ibid.*
    - c. In time, such folk would turn their ears from the truth to ***muthous***, extrabiblical stories that were not Scripture, 2 Tim. 4:4a,b. (*Ibid.*; *Ibid.*, Hendriksen, p. 58-59) This switch in **content** would negatively impact their beliefs and works, resulting in a loss of reward at Christ's return, 2 Timothy 4:1. [People tend to go from merely neglecting Scripture for extrabiblical works to denying the divine inspiration of Scripture, what occurred in many mainline churches and now increasingly affects many evangelicals!]
  - 2. However, in great contrast to those who go apostate, those messengers of God who faithfully discharged their duties before God would enjoy His enormous eternal reward for doing so, 2 Timothy 4:5-8:
    - a. Opposite this drift of many listeners into apostasy, Timothy was to be literally "sober," what here figuratively means "self-possessed" (***nepho***, Arndt & Gingrich, *A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T.*, 1967, p. 540) in all circumstances, 2 Tim. 4:5a. Timothy was to counter discouragement and disillusionment over what carnal hearers were doing by being aware that he was witnessing the Biblically predicted apostasy.
    - b. Thus, Timothy was to suffer hardship, to perform the work of an evangelist in giving the gospel and to discharge his ministry to the full, proclaiming the content of God's Word, 2 Timothy 4:5b NIV.
    - c. In the end, God would richly reward Timothy in eternity just as He was about to reward Paul for his ministry after his martyrdom, giving Paul a crown of righteousness that all who loved the Lord's appearing and who thus kept the faith in ministry would likewise receive from God, 2 Timothy 4:6-8.

***Lesson:*** *The Lord holds men highly accountable for how they interact with His Word: He will greatly reward His messengers if they fulfill their mission but He will not reward those hearers who go apostate or those of His messengers who fail in their duty. In view of eternity, then, God's messengers must faithfully preach the Word!*

***Application:*** *In view of the great consequences involved, may God's messengers faithfully preach God's Word!*