PREACH THE WORD

2 Timothy 4:2 Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction.

The Reasons for Paul’s Charge to Timothy

2 Timothy 4:1 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:

“In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus” is more literally “In the sight of God and of Christ Jesus.” Paul is saying what he says to Timothy knowing full well that God is observing what he says.

“Christ Jesus will judge the living and the dead.”

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

I Corinthians 3:11-13 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Christ Jesus. If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person’s work.

I Corinthians 3:14&15 If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved – even though only as one escaping through the flames.

Revelation 20:11-13 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done.

Revelation 20:14&15 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

Matthew 25:31-33 “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

Matthew 25:34, 41, 46 “Then the king will say to those one his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world’…Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels’…Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

“In view of his appearing and his kingdom.” Jesus is coming back and He will set up His kingdom and punish all sin. We need to live our lives in the light of this.

“Charge” translates a word so strong in Greek that the word “solemnly” is often added as part of the translation.

Preach the Word

2 Timothy 4:2 Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction.

“Preach the word.” Preach is not the Greek word for “preach the Gospel,” but rather a word that primarily means proclaim. “The word” is another way of saying the Scriptures discussed in 2 Timothy 3:15-17.

“Be prepared in season and out of season.” Two other translations: “be ready when the time is right and when it is not” and “be ready whether it is convenient or not.” The primary idea of the phrase is to be prepared and ready at all times.

“Correct” is *“elencho,”* a word meaning to convict, expose, rebuke or reprove. Vine’s says it is used usually “with the suggestion of putting the convicted person to shame.” It is one of the things Paul says the Word of God is useful for in 2 Timothy 3:16.

“Rebuke” is *“epitimao”* translated rebuke, tell sternly or warn sternly in the NASB. In the NIV of Matthew 9:30 “Jesus warned them sternly.” In the Gospels it is used of Jesus rebuking demons, people, a fever and even the wind and the sea.

“Encourage” is *“parakaleo,”* usually translated encourage but sometimes meaning to strongly encourage, to urge, beseech or beg. Acts 19:31 Even some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, sent him a message, begging him not to enter into the theater.

It is worth noting, especially in the light of verses three and four, that “correct” and “rebuke” are listed first and before “encourage.” One of the reasons evangelical Christianity has done far better in the United States than in Europe is the fact that our Constitution says that “Congress shall make no law regarding an establishment of religion.” There is no government backing for churches that drift away from teaching what the Word of God says.

The downside of that is that some people tend to go to churches where the sermons are always encouraging and positive and there is very little, if any, correcting or rebuking based upon the Word of God. In today’s theological jargon, they are usually called “affirming churches.” In the short term, such churches may seem to prosper, but in the long term they tend to die.A pastor cannot always be “positive and encouraging” and be faithful to the Word of God.

“With great patience” is more literally “with all longsuffering.” Paul uses this word to describe himself in 2 Timothy 3:10. “Longsuffering is that quality of self-restraint in the face of provocation that does not hastily retaliate or promptly punish.” (Vine’s) Correction and rebuke will often not be appreciated and Timothy is being told to keep preaching the Word in spite of negative responses.

“Careful instruction” is literally part of the phrase “with all longsuffering and teaching.” The admonition is to just keep teaching the entire counsel of God in spite of opposition. Good preaching includes careful teaching.

Some Things to Remember

We will all someday stand before God and give an account of our lives.

Paul solemnly charged Timothy to be always prepared and ready to preach the Word of God, whether it was convenient or not.

Paul emphasized that preaching should include correction, rebuke and encouragement.

Timothy was to preach the Word with all longsuffering and teaching.