

## Share the Scriptures!

### 2 Timothy 3:7-4:8

**Scripture Reading:** Daniel 3:8-25 [The three Israelites refuse to worship the idol]

**Introduction:** We live in a world that has largely disregarded God and His Word. As children, many of us were taught two items are not discussed in polite society at the dinner table: God and politics! When many are unbelievers or from different theological backgrounds, a sure recipe for discord is talking about theology, the thinking goes.

Last week we saw that Christ, looking forward to His death on Calvary for our sins spent some of His last hours on earth reassuring His disciples. In John 14, He told His frightened troubled disciples to trust the triune God- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In John 15, He commanded His lonely disciples to find strength and comfort by abiding in Himself as branches get vitality from the Vine. In John 16, He assured those who saw Satan's "victory" at the cross that they could triumph by the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures.

Jesus' message to His disciples is just as comforting and inspiring today as it was for His disciples all those years ago. We too live in a wicked world. Until the end of the age, we know that we will live in an unloving, ungrateful, unholy, greedy, entertainment-focused world (2 Timothy 3:1-8). People will love themselves, not God or others. Disobedience rather than loyalty and obedience are the theme of our day.

*In days like these, we need our Savior! In days like these, we need an anchor that holds steadfast in the storms of life. When fires burn away the temporary treasures of our lives, we need a treasure that endures and is only purified by the fires of life! We can sing with the hymnist: "my hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness!"<sup>1</sup>*

Today, as we continue seeing Paul's letter to the Ephesian pastor Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:7-4:8, note that God's Word is given to His people individually and is to be preached to His people corporately. Let's see God's Word opposed (2 Timothy 3:7-9), God's Word studied (2 Timothy 3:10-17) and God's Word shared (2

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<sup>1</sup> Hymn 539 My Hope is Built on Nothing Less. <https://www.prayertents.com/hymns?h=539>; the first sentences of the paragraph refer to "In Times Like These" which is not in our hymnal.

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Timothy 4:1-8). Have your Bibles open to read together 2 Timothy 3:8-4:8. [Read Scripture].

Once again, today we're seeing God's Word Opposed by the Wicked (2 Timothy 3:7-9) followed by God's Word Studied and Lived by the Righteous (2 Timothy 3:10-17) and conclude with God's Word Shared Corporately at Church (2 Timothy 4:1-8).

#### 1. God's Word Opposed (2 Timothy 3:7-9)

God has called His people *out of the world*. He has redeemed us from slavery to sin; He has emancipated us from the power of Satan; Praise God, He gives us victory over our own flesh!

2 Timothy 3:1-9 describes the wretchedness of wickedness that you and I were saved *from* if we are children of God. We just saw that the wicked are seekers; they know that they know not how to save themselves; they are *always learning* (3:7). Like Solomon in Ecclesiastes, they discover that all their searching, all their learning is *hebel*, breath, vanity. Life apart from God is worthless. Life apart from God does not satisfy. All our sins may offer a thrill or a promise of happiness— but they lie. They offer joy and satisfaction that they cannot give.

We are born spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1-4). Death is enmity to life; the world hates God (John 15:18-25). If the world hates God, it will hate followers of God. Thus it is no surprise that Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses when Moses came to free Israel from Pharaoh's slavery. Moses came proclaiming the Word of God: "Let My people Go!"

Pharaoh asked "who is the Lord?" His aids, Jannes and Jambres sought to maintain Pharaoh's power and their own authority. Their demonic empowered strength was broken by God's might as the plagues fell unimpeded upon Egypt. Pharaoh's servants resisted the truth, but they had to acknowledge that they lacked God's power and authority as the plagues fell upon them too!

Today, you and I can expect opposition as we love God and our neighbor. We will be hated for our righteousness. Peter assures us that it is better to

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suffer for our righteousness than to be punished and suffer for our sins (1 Peter 4). Note that before we were redeemed we sinned enough (1 Peter 4:1-6). Our lives are transformed when we are born again (John 3). We have a new nature and no longer pursue wickedness as we did before we trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior.

Our love for God and others is a testimony to a hostile world (1 Peter 4:7-11). Thus our cross is to suffer for righteousness' sake, even as our Savior did in His life (1 Peter 4:12-19).

Beloved, do not be surprised nor discouraged when the world, your loved ones, or your own flesh resists you when you seek to do the work of God according to the Word of God!

## 2. God's Word Studied (2 Timothy 3:10-17)

### 2.1 Watch how others obey God's Word

*Keep your eyes on Jesus as you suffer (2 Timothy 2:8-13). Watch other believers who endure for Jesus' sake, as Paul did. As we watch others suffer for the Savior, we see they are delivered (2 Timothy 3:10-11). Paul's life was an inspiration and an example to Timothy, as it is to us. In the midst of adversity, he focused on teaching God's Word. His conduct was pure, patient, and right as he was persecuted, stoned, shipwrecked, and afflicted.*

He was **patient** with unbelievers and immature saints. Read 1 Corinthians to see how he dealt with carnal Christians who had not matured as they should have.

His **love** for his coworkers, the churches he founded, and for God is clear from his epistles and his life.

His **perseverance** was legendary. **Jail him.** He witnesses to his guards (Philippians 1). People come to him for counsel and teaching (Acts 28). He writes epistles that continue to transform people through the Holy Spirit to this day. He desires to minister in Rome, prays to that end, and gets there as a prisoner. **Try to outwork him by sharing the gospel because you are jealous of him— he rejoices (Philippians 1). Discount his gospel**

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**work and he entreats as a father** (1 Corinthians 4:8-13). This man could be hurt. He could be discouraged. Nevertheless, he stayed faithful to his God and the work God called him to.

**2.2 Imitate the obedience and suffering of godly examples (2 Timothy 3:12-14).** Timothy had learned the Scriptures from his mother, his grandmother, and his mentor Paul (14). He had seen the life of his mother, who was married to a possibly unsaved Greek. That would have brought a spiritual struggle in the home; the mother seeking to please God, the father seeking to please himself or another god. Paul warns that all godly people will suffer persecution (12). Things get worse, not better in the world (13).

### 2.3 Study the Scriptures to Grow in Godliness (2 Timothy 3:15-17)

The Scriptures proclaim salvation through Jesus Christ”(15): believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved!” We are saved from the penalty of sin when we turn from sin (repent) and believe in Jesus Christ. We are being saved from the power of sin as our minds are washed by the Word of God, sanctifying us. We shall be saved from the very presence of sin when at last we are in our Savior’s presence, glorified, in heaven.

The Scriptures have great utility (16). They have the doctrine we need to know of God, man, the world, and the adversary. Just judgment is found in God’s Word to rebuke folly and sin. The Bible has the wisdom of God we need to correct our errors, to reprove our mistakes, to set us back upon the way when we stray from the truth. The Scriptures have principles and truths to instruct us in all righteous ways.

The Scriptures have great effectiveness (17). They transform Ezekiel’s skeletons into living breathing children of God (Ezekiel 37; John 3; Ephesians 2). They equip powerless people to become effective Christian warriors who defeat Satan, the world, and their own fleshly desires. They turn fools into scholars with wisdom. With God’s Word, *you are adequate to God’s Word by God’s Holy Spirit as you abide in Christ with the blessing of God the Father.* The Scriptures give you the tools you need to do every good work God has called you to do!

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#### Scripture Reading: Nehemiah 8:1-18

**Introduction:** Last week we began to examine the importance of God's Word in the Christian's life. Timothy saw Paul's example of godly living that was in accord with the Scriptures. He knew his mother and grandmother's teachings from the Scriptures. By experience, he knew what God's Word had wrought in his heart and life. Many of us have similar testimonies. We have had godly pastors and examples.

Our parents showed us what it meant to study God's Word and seek to live it out in their lives. Some of us remember our mothers going to prayer meetings; others may remember their fathers studying the Bible. You may remember sacrifices made to forsake the world and follow God. You remember your parents' generosity to others and the church.

You have felt your heart warmed in your own quiet time with the Lord. As you have communed with the Lord in prayer, read the Scriptures, and sought to understand, the Holy Spirit has opened your eyes, warmed your heart, and you have enjoyed times of sweet fellowship with your Lord and your God.

**God has declared that His Word is the gift of the Holy Spirit.** He is the Author of the Bible- ultimately responsible to ensure that the records of men of old were inerrant- without mistake. We are told in 1 Peter 1:16-21 of the surpassing value of the Spirit's work. *Peter had the privilege of witnessing our Savior's transfiguration (16-18).* As another witness, John the Apostle, said in John 1:14 "we saw His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Peter saw Jesus Christ- the Father's reflected glory. He saw his Savior's sinless life. He saw Jesus' compassion, His care for the multitudes who were like sheep without a shepherd. He saw the messianic sign of the blind receiving sight. He saw lepers healed. The dead were raised. Most remarkably (Mark 2), sins were forgiven! He had gone to Gethsemane and seen the weight of the coming cross weigh down the Lord he loved. But he had also seen the risen Lord. He had heard the declaration "this is My beloved Son. Hear Him!

As Peter remembers the glorious time on the mountain top, the time he had been so loath to leave that he tried to convince Jesus to camp out with Moses and Elijah in three tents- he says we have a word greater and more reliable than the word I heard- the glory my friends and I saw on that mountain! *Can you imagine*

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*a more trustworthy, more reliable, more sound witness that seeing with your own eyes? We have that witness in the Bible! Read 2 Peter 1:19-21.* The human authors of the Bible were not using their own wisdom and words alone. The Holy Spirit carried them along— as a rising tide carries a boat along, these men were swept away irresistibly to proclaim **the exact words** God wanted to record for all time!

### 3. God's Word Shared (2 Timothy 4:1-8)

Every Christian is called to study the Scriptures for themselves, but we are also blessed by preachers who proclaim God's Word in truth.

#### 3.1 Preaching is Mandated: This is Required (4:1-2)

The pastor is charged in the sight of God to preach the Word! This is a high holy calling to speak for God. The pastor has the responsibility of proclaiming: "Thus saith the Lord!" He is accountable to the Judge of all the Earth to proclaim God's Word without fear of man.

What should a pastor preach about? Politics? Movies? 101 Ways to Be Healthy Happy and Handsome in 2025? No. **The message of the pastor is to be the Word of God. Preach the Word!**

**Be ready.** Pastors need to speak seasonally- be ready to speak about how God's Word applies to our lives. Prophets of old spoke to kings and commoners. The Word of God does apply to politics; proclaiming righteousness may occasionally address what the Bible says about political issues. This offends the world and Christians who want to leave their Christianity in church. The Bible, however, speaks to both our individual lives and the entire world. We are citizens of the Kingdom of heaven, ambassadors for Christ, and must be salt and light in an appropriate way.

**Be patient.** God is still working on His people. None of us are perfect! We all need the "reprove, rebuke" that God's work does in our own lives (2 Timothy 3:16). Sometimes the word from the pastor reinforces (repeats) or explains what God is doing in our own private quiet times with the Lord. The Lord Jesus Christ bid us take His yoke upon us "for I am meek (KJV)/ gentle (NASB) and lowly (KJV)/ humble (NASB) in heart" (Matthew 11:29). Jesus was gentle with those who sincerely came with Him.

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**Be encouraging.** Exhort. Encourage others to do what God's Word calls God's people to do. Exhorting is rallying; it is the general crying "charge!" as he leads the hosts of heaven into battle against Satan and the foes of God. Pastors exhort with sound doctrine (Titus 1:9).

**Be instructing.** Pastors must be able to teach (1 Timothy 3:2; 2 Timothy 2:2, 24). They are students of God's Word who share what they have learned with others. My prayer as I preach is that the Holy Spirit will open our eyes to understand God's Word, His will and how to do it!

#### 3.2 Preaching is Tedious to the Ungodly (4:3-4)

**Hatred. Micaiah was odious to the king (1 Kings 22:8).** He had a bad habit of condemning the king's sins and proclaiming God's judgment. The king complained that Micaiah was a "negative Nancy": he never has anything good to say to me!

**Censure.** Old Testament prophets were sometimes told to be quiet— stop prophesying. Micaiah was advised to tell the king what he wanted to hear (1 Kings 22:13). **Amos was commanded by the idolatrous priest of Bethel, Amaziah, to no longer prophecy** because it was not in accord with state policy (Amos 7:10-13). Pronouncing God's judgment on Israel was too discouraging to endure!

**Entertainment.** Paul speaks of "itching ears." They want to put their message in the preacher's mouth; not God's Word. Some want stories; others want jokes; others look for charisma. Other OT prophets were treated as entertainers. People would listen to their messages and critique their speaking, their oratory... but ignore their message.

In the New Testament, Greeks loved philosophy. Paul got a hearing for the gospel by proclaiming the "unknown God" of the idolatrous people in Athens (**Acts 17:19-31**). My friends, few carnal or ungodly people hunger and thirst for righteousness. For such, sermons are only tedious. Jesus often spoke in parables to hide His glorious salvation from those who rejected Him. Churches cater to this resistance by adding more music,

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more entertainment, and cutting sermon times. Sermons shouldn't be boring.

**Physical Infirmary.** Often when God's Word is being proclaimed there is both a spiritual and physical battle taking place. Jesus spent a long day in a Bible conference. At the end of a long day of ministry (which was very long!) He fed 5000 (John 6). Another time He fed 4000 after several days of ministry from concern for their physical needs (Mark 8:1-3). We normally don't spend the time Ezra did to read the entire Law of Moses for our services, but sermons do take time. I know *we get hungry!*

*We get tired.* The great Apostle Paul himself had people sleeping through his extended sermon that went until midnight (Acts 20:7-12). He was getting ready to leave town and had a full heart. His message went on. The room was full. It got warm. It was late. One man's eyes got heavy. He retired to a window to get fresh air and stay awake. It didn't work. His eyelids grew heavier and heavier. They dropped. So did he. He fell out the window. Truly, the Sabbath should be a day of rest, so it is easy to rest our heavy eyelids when the pastor speaks on... and on.

**4.3 Preaching is a Tool of Salvation (4:5):** Evangelists call the lost to the Lord. God redeems some as they read the Scriptures. Others are won by friends. Others come to Christ by preaching. Pray for preachers!

#### **4.4 Preaching and Godly Living is Rewarded (4:6-8)**

Paul was a sufferer. Paul's evangelism and preaching had resulted in him being stoned, reviled, tried and imprisoned. He knew his work on earth was nearly done because he was going to die for Jesus' sake and the gospel. What kept him going? He had a hope that God would keep His promises. He expected a reward for his laborers in the ministry and as a Christian.

**Conclusion:** Brothers and sisters, my purpose in this message is not to guilt trip you if you struggle with the length of my sermons. They are long. I try to be sensitive to that. Last week and this week we have seen that God's Word is profitable for us as individual Christians and for us as a church. Preaching is one of the things that happens in church. If a church doesn't have preaching, it is NOT doing its job. The proclamation of God's Word is *vital* to the church. Preaching breaks the bread of heaven to nourish our souls. Pray for me. Pray for



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us. Let us delight in the proclamation of God's Word. Pastors and preaching are God's gift to His church (Ephesians 4; 1 Peter 5).