



Paul's 2nd Letter to Timothy

Passing on the Baton

Autumn 2017



2 Timothy 4: 1-8

(sermons: Nov 5)

Introduction: *These verses are Paul's last instructions to Timothy, so they show Paul's key priorities for the church in Ephesus, where Timothy is a leader.*

2 Tim 4:1-5 Paul's Charge to Timothy

- v.1 *who will judge the living and the dead – those who are living when Jesus returns at the end of time and those who have died in the meantime.*
 - v.1 *in view of his appearing and his kingship – Jesus' return at the end of time as king and judge, so he has authority over Timothy and the church, who are and will be accountable to him*
 - v.1 *this charge – serious instruction; the word emphasizes Timothy's responsibility*
 - v.2 *Preach the Word (or word) – proclaim the word that has come from God, the message of Jesus (as in 2 Tim 1:13-14; 2:2); proclaim, or announce it like a herald, or town-crier, in the market-place.*
 - v.2 *be prepared in season and out of season – be 'on duty', ready to act at any time, not just when the situation seems favourable, or people are responsive, or when Timothy feels like it*
 - v.2 *correct, rebuke and encourage – or 'convince, rebuke and exhort': argue the case for those who have questions or doubts; challenge those who are reluctant to change their lives; encourage those who are fearful that God loves them and Jesus really will come into their lives.*
 - v.2 *with great patience – persevering forbearance as in 2 Tim 2:24-25*
 - v.3 *itching ears – perhaps meaning that the teaching only 'tickles their ears' (rather than going in deeper), or perhaps that they want the teaching to be adapted to their own particular preferences*
 - v.4 *myths – stories with no basis in fact (unlike the historical life, death and resurrection of Jesus)*
 - v.5 *the work of an evangelist – spreading the message of Jesus to new hearers, calling them to respond*
1. What does Paul say is Timothy's main task as leader of the church in Ephesus? Why is it so important? What are the positive and negative sides of Timothy's role? What personal qualities does he need to show and how will they affect how he treats the people for whom he is responsible? To whom is Timothy accountable?
 2. Which parts of Paul's instructions apply today and to the situation in Trull and Angersleigh? What applies.... to everyone? ... to leaders (and who are they)? What needs to be done by someone? If we are not doing all of these things ourselves, how can we support those who are?
 3. Look at *verse 2*: how is every word important? What is a challenge for you, or for our church?
 4. Where today can we see the attitudes in *verses 3 and 4*? Do we ever see them in ourselves? What should we do when people find the church's teaching is not what they want? When is the church (and that includes all of us) tempted *not* to 'preach the word' or make it a priority?
 5. What can you remember of Adrian's last address to the combined congregations of Angersleigh and Trull on 15th October? (*Was it about thriving, growing and bearing fruit, as he said beforehand?*)

2 Tim 4:6-8 Looking Back, Looking Forward

- v.6 *For I am already being poured out like a drink offering – in contrast to Timothy’s possibility of continuing ministry, Paul sees his approaching death: his blood being poured out like one of the Old Testament sacrifices.*
- v.6 *my departure – again, his approaching death: leaving this world, including Timothy and the church; the word can be used of a boat slipping its moorings ready to cross to the other side.*
- v.7 *I have finished the race – just as Paul told the leaders of this same Ephesian church, when he last saw them, that he hoped to do (Acts 20:24)*
- v.7 *I have kept the faith – remained faithful, or more likely given Paul’s use of the faith, that he has kept safe the teaching about Jesus and passed it on intact (as in 2 Tim 1:13-14).*
- v.8 *the crown of righteousness – the recognition (like the winning athlete’s laurel wreath) that Paul has lived a good life (not the basis of his acceptance by God, but the fruit of it); unlike the Roman Emperor, who is condemning him, the true King Jesus will vindicate him, declaring him ‘righteous’.*
- v.8 *on that day – the day of ‘his appearing’ at the end of human history, when Jesus is recognized as the true King of the world (rather than the passing emperors who have condemned Paul)*
- v.8 *all who have longed for his appearing – it is only when we have been accepted by God that we can look forward to Jesus’ return as king and judge.*
6. What is Paul expecting to happen to him? What is he looking forward to beyond that?
Do we have the same sure hope; and is it, or should it be, part of our everyday thinking?
7. Look at what Paul says about himself in *verse 7*. Do we aim to be able to say the same ourselves, at the end of our lives? What could dissuade us, or distract us, from the struggle and the race?
How can we help each other to keep going: personally, as a group, and as a church?