

A Charge To Keep!

Dr. Edward Watke Jr.

Introduction:

Paul is instructing his young son in the faith; Timothy is a young preacher, and is being led into a position of tremendous responsibility. Timothy will be dealing with the souls of people so he will need to take the greatest care possible in doing this.

Paul wants him to be all that God desires for him. This young man had a good start in the Christian life. His home training was all that could be expected. He knew something of the value and importance of the Scriptures. Now he is no longer home where he could enjoy his godly parent's counsel and spiritual influence.

There is no college or seminary where Timothy could be blessed by Bible loving and spiritual instructors. Timothy is out in an apostate world that will care little about his message and many will likely reject his ministry.

The Apostle Paul has a great love for this young Christian servant. He is deeply concerned about "*his son in the faith*" and he does not want Timothy to falter or fail in his ministry.

Probably no passage in all the epistles of Paul contains so stirring an appeal as does this final charge to Timothy. It has all the seriousness of a last farewell, and it is made even more solemn by the phrases with which it is introduced, as the Apostle charges Timothy in the "*in the sight of God*" and also "*of Christ Jesus,---* of whose unseen presence both Paul and Timothy are conscious and before whom both must give account in the great day when He comes to "*judge the living and the dead.*"

By the glorious appearing and by the perfected kingdom which will follow, Paul adjures Timothy to heed this last command.

We are looking at Paul's last words and they are very significant to Timothy. We have a window into Paul's heart as he challenges Timothy. In view of this every servant of the Lord ought to take heed to these words, especially every pastor -- all those who minister the Scriptures.

I. The CHARGE -- PREACH THE WORD: II Tim. 4:1-4

The charge was given by means of five brisk imperatives all in the aorist tense and without connecting particles. The duty for Timothy is set forth with the force of military commands and the tense implies immediate action.

A. As one about to be judged.

The words, "*I charge thee,*" causes us to realize this was a serious moment and Paul wanted Timothy to sense the importance of it.

It was serious because Paul was about to pass from this world scene and

because both would face God and be judged for their works one day. This realization should cause us to be careful and watchful about ministry.

it should deliver from the fear of man -- for after all, the final Judge is God. We are serving Him not man.

B. DO--the main responsibility, “preach the Word.”

The word, preach, means “to preach like a herald.” In Paul’s day a ruler had a special herald who made announcements to the people. He was commissioned by the ruler to make his announcements in a loud, clear voice so everyone could hear. He was not an ambassador with the privilege of negotiating; he was a **messenger** with a proclamation to be heard and heeded. Not to heed the ruler’s messenger was serious.

Timothy was to herald God’s Word with the authority of heaven behind him. He was to preach the Word, that is -- the Word of God, the gospel. This stands first at the very heart and center of his work. This is man’s supreme need and it was Timothy’s highest and primary task.

The Word of God is what saved and unsaved must hear. It must be presented in an authoritative manner.

Above all he was to preach **doctrine**... not simply tell stories, relate interesting illustrations, or read a verse or two ... but “*true preaching is the explanation and application of Bible doctrine. Anything else is just religious speechmaking.*”

C. DO IT -- with needed consistency in the work...“be urgent in season, out of season...”

Timothy was to be alert and diligent to use every opportunity to preach the Word -- when it was favorable and even when not so favorable.

You must be in constant readiness to proclaim the message entrusted to you...

“He who desires to wait until the occasion seems completely favorable for his work, will never find it.” “It is easy to make excuses when we ought to make opportunities.”

Paul was always ready (Rom. 1:14-16) whether in the temple courts, the stormy sea, or even in prison. We are to be ready always... whether circumstances appear “opportune or inopportune.”

D. Preaching is to be marked by three elements: “reprove, rebuke, exhort.”

REPROVE -- or convict those who are erring from the truth or failing in holiness. (I Tim. 5:20; Titus 1:13; 2:15)

REBUKE-- is a stronger word... to “*chide, censure, or blame.*” He must reprimand the sinner and not tone down for sin. This deals with warning!

EXHORT -- or to admonish and encourage. Timothy was to appeal to the conscience, to the reason, and to the will.

Timothy was to do this with all “**long-suffering and doctrine..**” (or teaching.) He was to give tender, sympathetic admonition and encouragement.

His work was to be characterized by an attitude of the utmost long-suffering and self-restraint and resisting every temptation to impatient anger at the obstinacy and perverseness of those being dealt with.

Why: the time will come when people will not desire the truth. They will not tolerate or put up with sound doctrine and they will desire the novel; they will desire teachers after their own lusts. They want men who will tickle their ears or give what is comfortable, that which will allow them to continue in their sins.

Mankind desires that which will satisfy their craving for novelty, or flatter their vanity, or condone their faults; therefore, they will welcome a host of teachers who will offer to meet their religious needs without insisting on morality.

II. THE CHARGE... FULFILL YOUR MINISTRY: II Tim. 2:5

“But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.”

A. Make full proof of thy ministry...

The verb tense means... *“to accomplish”* your ministry. to *“discharge all your duties as a minister of the gospel.”*

Timothy was putting his hand to the plough, and was not to look back until his ministry was completed. How true for any called servant. **But how??**

There are three imperatives here...

1. by “watching in all things”

The verb means to be *sober minded, moral alertness and presence of mind* to understand what he was to be about. A *watchful, alert attitude* toward Christ's coming. A *Seriousness of purpose* in his labors.

2. by “enduring hardships, afflictions.”

Timothy was not only a preacher, he was a soldier, (2:3-4) who would need to endure. Paul had gone through much suffering with most of it at the hand of the religious crowd.

Ill treatment will come, he will experience reproach and possible persecution. The manifold tasks, the harassing difficulties, the manifestations of antagonism *must not distract him from his primary task... to...*

3. Do “the work of an evangelist.”

As a bringer of good news he is not encouraging him about an office, but rather his chief activity was to bring the lost to salvation. His ministry must be evangelistic in nature in spite of toil and hardship. He is to labor consistently to reach the lost. He must have soul winning at the heart of all he does.

B. Consider the Need Today:

1. Our fervor for the Lord has cooled off because of lack of interest.
2. Worldly interests have robbed the saints of time in which they might serve the Lord.
3. We have neglected earnest praying for the salvation of the lost.
4. Insufficient power has left us too weak to work.
5. Instability and lack of concentration has allowed us to be blown about by every worldly attraction.
6. An intemperate and rejecting world has frightened us until we are afraid to witness.
7. Sleeping saints in the pew have all but closed their hearts to the Lord... arouse them... blow the trumpet... make full proof of your ministry.