

2Timothy 25-02-09a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace & Truth Bible Church. We have guests in the auditorium today and we have people that look like they're ready for foot washing because they have on no shoes. So I'm gonna have to go back and reteach the whole doctrine of foot washing.

No, it's great to have all of y'all with us this morning. We're going to continue our study in the book of 2 Timothy in chapter four, looking at this charge that Paul makes to his protege, if you will. Timothy spent many, many months with Paul in the mission field in establishing churches and helping them to grow through the teaching of the word of God.

And Paul now says that in verse six, I am already being poured out as a drink offering and the time of my departure is at hand. We're gonna see something connected to our present passage with that term at hand. But we're in verse two, preach the word.

And in preceding sessions, we have looked at what our response should be to the preached word. We're going to return to the responsibility of the communicator here this morning. So let's ask God's blessing on our fellowship and study and we'll begin.

Father, we are so grateful for another opportunity to spend this time together, to find the mutual encouragement, the benefits of fellowship and intercessory prayer and the witness that each life reflects of your glory and your grace and your provision. We thank you for the Lord Jesus for his work on our behalf, his presence at your right hand, representing us, interceding for us and awaiting the command to return and take us to himself. We pray that as we look at this portion of your word together, that the Holy Spirit will find us ready pupils and teachable, humble hearts so that the word can be implanted deeply and will bear its fruit, that we can represent the Lord Jesus on this earth as his body and be more and more prepared for service and function in this life and in the ages to come.

We pray it in Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Let's review our text very quickly in chapter four, verse one and following.

I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ who will judge the living and the dead. I charge you by his appearing and his kingdom, preach the word, be ready in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and teaching for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers and they will turn their ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

I am already being poured out as a drink offering and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race.

I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge will give to me on that day and not to me only, but also to all who have loved his appearing." One of the things you may observe in verse eight is the kind of thing we have seen time and again in Proverbs where a unit of thought is marked off by what they call an inclusio. It's like the opening and closing brackets, something that is common at the beginning and at the end and creates a wrapper or an envelope around the idea.

Just take a look at verse eight. There is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge. You can clearly see that taking you back to verse one.

I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ who will judge the living and the dead. Paul says, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness. Now think about this.

Paul is reminding Timothy that what we do in terms of fulfilling our responsibilities, exercising our gift, walking in the faith, in love, in hope is going to be evaluated and rewarded or disciplined at the judgment. Paul says, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness. This is exciting.

This is encouraging to me that we can look at our lives, look at what God has done in his grace, through his power, the word and the spirit. And we have assurance that we will stand at the judgment and be rewarded. You think, well, this is the apostle Paul.

He's a special case and a special category. Why does Paul mention this to Timothy? If he's exceptional because he's an apostle and he's getting a special crown, how does that help Timothy? If anything, it might be a discouragement. I'm an apostle, you're not.

I get the crown of righteousness. Who knows what you're going to get? The reason Paul brings this up, he uses himself time and again in letter after letter as an example. You have observed my faith.

You have seen my teaching in action. You have seen the results and how God has blessed it. Remember verse 10 of the previous chapter, you have carefully followed my doctrine, my manner of life, my purpose, my faith, long suffering, love and perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened one place and another.

Out of them all, the Lord delivered me. This is an example for Timothy and it is an example for us. If we are faithful and obedient, we can count on the grace of God being expressed in open doors and greater opportunity and privileges.

This is what the rewards are. It's not sort of an aggrandizement or something that will personally enrich or please us. It is the opportunity.

As with anyone who is good at what they do and that is recognized by supervision or leadership, here's someone who's really good. Let's move them up. Let's give them more scope, more potential, more opportunity, more resources.

They're doing a good job for us. Let's see how much more they can do. That's what our rewards are.

The crowns and things that are mentioned at the judgment are not simple ribbons and medals or decorations you pin on your lapel. These are levels of service and function where we have the opportunity to reflect the glory of God in coming days, coming eternal situations. And Paul says, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness.

What does it take to have that crown? Is it only Paul? He says, he will give it to me on that day. The Lord, the righteous judge, it will be right and proper. It's not an unwarranted gift.

It is a righteous judge who will award this crown to me on that day, not to me only, but to all who have loved his appearing. That's another word we had back in verse one. I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ who will judge the living and the dead at his appearing, his epiphany, epiphaneia.

All those who love his appearing, what does it mean to love his appearing? A lot of people get excited about the Lord is coming back. I can't wait. I'm going to see my old friends and relatives who have gone before and everybody will be happy over there.

What does it mean to love his appearing? It is to follow this charge. For Timothy, it is the charge to preach and teach faithfully in season, out of season. But the conditions and the opportunities are the same for whatever gift you have.

To be ready with warning or no warning. It may be something we anticipate. It may be something that surprises us in the moment.

Suddenly here is a chance to exercise the gifts, the growth, the strengths, the framework that God has put in our soul to minister to the body of Christ and individuals within it in a unique way that is personal to us. So Timothy, as is so often the case, is the exemplar, but the truth applies to each one of us. Otherwise, there would be a thing at the beginning.

If you're not a pastor, skip this book, but it's true for all of us. So what does it mean to love his appearing? It is to live our life in the light of the coming evaluation and to endeavor to be pleasing in God's sight and at the Lord Jesus' judgment seat. So for Timothy, what is he to do to be prepared for that day? To be another one who will be in line for the crown of righteousness.

Another one who loved the Lord's appearing enough to be faithful and diligent and obedient and enthusiastic and persistent, ready in season and out of season to do his job. What is he to do? Preach the word. Why? Verse three, the time will come.

They, meaning those at large who will hear that preaching will not endure sound doctrine. This harks back to chapter three. In the latter days, perilous times will come.

People will be distracted. They will be interested in pleasing themselves. Well, I've got an

identity.

I have an ambition. I have a dream. I have a vision of where I can be and what I can do.

It may or may not have any grounding in reality, but being a lover of self is to put our own aspirations, our own satisfactions, our own enthusiasms and enjoyments first. Lovers of themselves, lovers of money. Most cases, it takes resources to fulfill our dreams.

So you find money and you remember down in verse four, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. Loving self is to make the priority pleasing myself. What is pleasing to me rather than pleasing God? To love God is to love his sons and daughters.

To love God is to love his sons appearing. So the time will come, they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires. And this is detailed for us back in chapter three.

Because they have itching ears, it isn't enough to pursue these things. We like to have a rationalization and a justification. Well, here's why I have to go this way, here's why I have to depart from the Biblical path.

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, but if you're going to justify the way of the ungodly, then their counsel, their reasons, their explanations, their justifications are going to issue forth. So if you walk in the counsel of the ungodly, you're going to stand in the way of sinners, and you're going to sit in the seat of the scornful. You must inevitably reject the truth of God, those who represent the truth of God, who live in the light of the truth of God.

There is going to be a dismissive, light opinion given at best if it isn't outright disdain and scorn and heaping insult and abuse on those who are endeavoring to walk in truth. Remember in 1 John, I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. I think it's 1 John 1.4 maybe, memory serves.

I have no greater joy than that my children walk in truth. If they don't walk in truth, they're walking in the counsel of the ungodly. And all of these human rationalizations and justifications are put forth and in place of God's truth.

That's why Paul exhorts Timothy, preach the word. The time will come, they will not endure sound doctrine. You've got to get it in early and often because the time will come when they'll slam the door.

They will no longer endure it. This is harking back to the Old Testament promise, train up a child in the way that he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it. There may be some intermediate wandering, but the goal is to provide the training so that they have something to come back to, something that represents truth.

And the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, it isn't enough to just I'm going to live for myself today. I have to have a framework and

a rationalization to explain it and defend it and calm my conscience and shut down my sensitivity to the Holy Spirit if I'm a believer. And these are believers, by the way, because preaching the word is pointless to those who have rejected God and His word.

Instead, they accept God. This is like the Pharisees. We believe in God.

Abraham is our father. We're expecting great things in God's future, but they don't endure the doctrine. This is what the Baptists call backsliders.

What your isagogical, categorical, exegetical pastors call reversionists. You're a believer, but you throw it over and go your own way. You will be saved, yet so as by fire.

You will be in the darkness which is outside. You will be cut into and apportioned your lot with the hypocrites. Like the Pharisees, you will see others entering into the place of blessing and opportunity.

Sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom is the figure Jesus used with the Jews of His day, and you yourselves thrust out. Loss of opportunity, loss of inheritance, loss of reward, no crowns of righteousness or the crown of life or the other three crowns that are mentioned in Scripture as rewards for faithful believers. The blessings on those who overcome in Revelation 2 and 3, promised personally by the Lord Jesus Christ, the white stone, the new name, pillar in the temple, having God's name written upon you, to walk with Him in white, to partake of the hidden manna and so on.

Lost, all lost. As a believer, how tragic. It's a calamity, it's a catastrophe to be deflected and distracted and diverted from the path of truth.

So Timothy is to preach it, because the time will come when they, believers who ought to know better, will depart. They will not endure sound doctrine. They will substitute their desires for God's desires, their notions of right and wrong, for God's Holy Spirit convicting of sin and righteousness and judgment.

Why? They have itching ears. This is ears that want to be the ears of the tickled. This is hearing what we want to hear and disregarding the rest.

And they will heap up for themselves teachers. You find somebody who gives you the message you want to hear. Let me ask you this, if you suddenly developed serious symptoms and suspected you might have a debilitating and degenerating disease, would you go in search of a doctor who could diagnose, treat, and give you a positive prognosis? Or would you go to a doctor that says, oh no, you're fine.

I've got some palliative medicine here that will alleviate the symptoms. You don't need surgery. You don't need the tumor removed.

You don't need any intensive therapy or any painful rehabilitation. No, no, no. And you could

heap up.

You could go to several different doctors who are all notable for just telling you what you want to hear. It's all fine. The future is so bright you've got to wear shades.

What is the use of that? It's self-defeating. And we saw this in Proverbs recently where the one who doesn't listen to wise counsel despises his own soul. You're doing nothing but hurting yourself and those around you to not be realistic.

To not go where there is genuine help. The great physician with power beyond human imagination for healing, for restoration, for future opportunities, for working all things together for good. But they will heap up for themselves teachers and they will turn their ears away from the truth.

This is why Paul says in verse 2, be ready in season and out of season. These are words related to time. One of them, kairos, remember there's two words for time, kairos and chronos.

We get chronometer from the chronos word. But kairos is more of a time, a durative sort of time. And kairos is more of a time and this is eukairos, E-U, the prefix that means good.

Euphonia, euphonious, that means good sound. Eureka means I've found something good. I see something good.

It's a good happenstance. This is eukairos. So be ready, we looked at this word last time, epistathai, this is to stand upon, to stand by, to be ready.

In fact, this same word in the perfect tense, we have it here in the imperative. It's an aorist imperative. And the aorist imperative has the idea of start doing this.

A present imperative is keep on doing this. And there is an encouragement here from Paul and the subtle implication here is maybe Timothy has been reluctant to be bold and forthcoming in the preaching of the word. He may have been daunted by some negative reactions, people that despised his youth or argued with his presentation of the truth.

And as a younger pastor, he may have been reluctant to speak out. He may have become a bit querulous, a bit hesitant, a bit uncertain, not confident, not convinced, not bold. So Paul says, you have got to start being ready.

You've got to stand by. The perfect tense of this is down in verse six. I am being poured out as already, and the time of my departure is standing by, has already come to stand by.

That's the perfect. It's happened in the past. And this is another fascinating revelation by Paul.

Not only does he talk about confidence at the judgment, but God has given him a sense that his time of service is coming to a close and the time of his departure is standing by. It has come to stand by. Paul recognizes it.

The Holy Spirit is the one who is the paraclete. He is the one who comes alongside as an encourager. Parakaleo is someone who is called to come beside.

Paramedic, you call the medic to be at your side. Paraclete is the one who is called alongside for encouragement. I will send you another comforter, Jesus said, talking about the Holy Spirit and is alongside.

So Paul says, you need to start standing by. You need to be at hand when there is an opportunity, when there is a willing ear, when there is a group that expresses interest and enthusiasm and a positive response. You need to be standing by.

Epithet. Epistrophe is how this turns out when you do all the Greek morphology. So, start standing by.

In good times, Eukairos and out of season is Akairos. Remember the alpha privative is negative. It is a no.

So, you have no time. This is no time to be talking about that. You preach it anyway.

You be standing by whether it is good time or no time. You should be ready whatever kind of season it is, whatever the environment. Don't say, well, there is nobody responsive, so I don't need to have a message loaded in my soul.

I don't need to keep myself soaked in the Word. I don't need to have a response when someone says is there any word from the Lord? If nobody is asking the question, why should I bother to be prepared? Paul says, you need to start being ready whether you think there is an occasion or not. How do we get ready? When he says, be ready, stand by, this is sort of along the lines of our study in the past on watch and pray.

How can we be standing by? What does it mean to stand by? How do we accomplish a spiritual standing by? What do people in medicine and people in education do once they have graduated college and gone out and gotten a job? Remember the CEs, continuing education? I keep myself current. I keep myself soaked in my profession. I keep up with developments and current events and trends and new technologies, new developments.

If you're a computer guy, you might have started out back in the old days of floppy disks and 56K of memory for everything to run on your IBM PC. If you could add 16K and get up to 64, wow, you've got the most powerful personal computer there is compared to the 16K of your TI-99 that you have to connect to your TV for a monitor. But time marches on.

We're not still using monochrome screen IBM PCs from the early 1980s. What happens as the technology develops and expands and there's more RAM and more devices and more capabilities, you've got to keep up. I don't even have a computer job at present.

I would love to have a computer job, but it's a kairos. I'm not currently in the field. They're not

paying me to do anything.

If you have ambitions of being an IT guy, you're reading computer magazines. You are following events now on the World Wide Web. You are keeping yourself current.

If you started out in those days and you're an IT person and that's one of the ways you make your living, what are you doing now? You are learning everything there is to know about artificial intelligence and about NVIDIA chips and about dedicated computers and how they are used and where are the dangers and where are the opportunities and how can its good side be exploited and how can its bad side be avoided. You may not have a job doing formal computer work in these fields, but you keep yourself soaked in it so that you are ready when a kairos comes along. You don't have to go cram.

You don't have to go research. You don't have to say, of course I know that and then run home and try to figure it out. You're already prepared.

Whatever our spiritual gift, whatever our personal contacts, whatever our areas of conversation, our relationships, our friends, our relatives, our co-workers, we may not have anyone to share the good news of Jesus Christ who is an unbeliever, but I should be ready at any moment to give the gospel as they like to say. If someone were to say, so why do you maintain this optimism in the face of so many so much hardship? You say, well, I believe in the Lord Jesus and His Spirit and His Word provide me comfort and power and guidance and direction and hope for the future and joy in the present and it's a wonderful life and I have a daily walk with my Savior and I have a Heavenly Father who looks out for me and provides for my needs and I go to Him freely in prayer and I'm not trapped in circumstances. I'm not limited or dictated to by events and the unexpected.

I have a transcendent joy and love and peace and they say, well, how can I get that? You say Jesus and God in Heaven, well, how does that work? Are you ready to explain the gospel to someone? Just because there's nobody in the present periphery, if somebody did start asking questions, would you have to run back to the Bible or try to find the Roman road or the wordless book? What was that red page again and the black page and the white page and the green page and the gold page? Were there verses that went with those? Are you ready to give the gospel to someone should they express an interest? Maybe somebody thought they were saved and they suddenly say, I don't think I really have the kind of salvation you're talking about. You seem to be living a life that is completely foreign to me. What is this and how can I get to where you are? Are you ready? Are you standing by? Epi, histemi, I am standing upon, I am standing by, I am ready always to give an answer to anyone who asks me a reason for my hope and I don't have to say, let me get back to you.

I am ready in season or out of season. Just because I don't see an opportunity doesn't mean God knows there's one coming up this afternoon or tomorrow morning or unexpectedly. My car breaks down.

I call insurance. They send a tow truck and the tow driver is hooking up and you suddenly wind up in conversation and all of a sudden it's a spiritual conversation and maybe it's a fellow believer but they're struggling with implementing their faith and accessing the power of God. A word fitly spoken like apples of gold and pictures of silver can be us if we are ready.

How are we ready? We look to ourselves first. When the oxygen masks drop, you've got to put your own on first so that you're ready to help somebody else with theirs and we have to look to ourselves. Remember in Proverbs, we do what is good for us and for others.

So we maintain our spiritual health, our spiritual vitality. We're in prayer. We are reflecting on the things we learn in the word of God and they are ready.

They are at hand and God will see to it that our recent investigations, our recent Bible classes, our recent personal devotions, our recent scripture reading, something that we've consciously made an effort to expose ourselves to, it will in divine provision come about that that very truth because we were proactive and we wanted to be ready in season and out of season. God will bring opportunities that for us are out of season but are in His perfect plan and we will have the occasion to minister to fellow believers with our spiritual gift, to be witnesses and let our light so shine before men that others see it and glorify our Father in heaven. What does it mean to glorify the Father? I want to draw closer to Him.

I want to be related to Him. I want to appreciate Him and be blessed by Him and express my love for Him through His Son, the Lord Jesus. Let your light so shine.

That's every day, all the time, curating our attitudes and our thoughts and our words and our actions, always in the light of being pleasing in God's sight, loving His appearing to the point that we measure everything we say and do and think by how will this hold up at His appearing. I love Him. I don't want to disappoint Him.

I don't want to be relegated to a distance from my Lord and Savior and my Heavenly Father and those who love Him. I want to be in that number when the saints go marching in. I don't want to be those saints who are marching out.

A lot of people are going to be interested in New Orleans this afternoon. Remember that when the saints go marching in, how I long to be in that number? Well, just remember, not all the saints are going to be marching in. A lot of them are going to be marching into the darkness which is outside because they preferred something ear-tickling, something that affirmed them in their own desires instead of informing them about God's desires and pointing to the means by which we can be pleasing in God's sight, not in our own eyes.

So critical. It begins with the preaching of the truth. Ready or not, here I come.

But it is true for all of us. We should all be standing by to do our part of representing the Lord Jesus Christ in this earth on His behalf, loving His appearing and measuring everything we think, say and do in that light. Well, it's a good place to pause and take our break.

When we come back we'll pick up here looking at this very powerful charge that Paul delivers to Timothy and to us in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. We'll see it again when we come back.