

2Timothy 25-02-09b

We're ready now to resume our investigation of this very powerful, very dense and meaty section here in 2 Timothy chapter 4. So applicable and motivating for us to remember who we are, why we're here, how we redeem the time, and when it is a kairos and not a time where we're called upon to do a thing, do we just fall back and relax? Do we say, well, life is clicking along in an easy fashion? We always remember to be standing by, to be watching and praying for opportunities to express our faithfulness, our preparation, our preparedness to fulfill the function that God has assigned each and every one of us. There is no one listening to the sound of my voice that God has not specifically prepared and gifted. And here is the fuel.

Here is the guidance. Here is the power of God to carry out that function and fulfill that opportunity and responsibility. And when it seems like we're not online, we're not on watch, we're off duty, so to speak, that is the time to be ever more diligent and be ready always, not just to give an answer when we're asked, but be prepared and spiritually over our feet with our knees flexed, ready to take a blow if it comes unexpectedly.

So often our circumstances can change in an instant. And we thought everything was predictable and peaceful and on a track and out of nowhere, as if by magic, suddenly everything changes. The rapture is going to happen in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye.

Many of our circumstances and situations sort of appear out of the traffic and hit us when we least expect it. But if we are standing by, if we are constantly referring to the presence of the Holy Spirit and the truth of the word of God in our souls and ready, then we will not be knocked off our feet. We won't be taken aback.

We won't be stalled out. We will flex. We will adapt.

We will be ready in that hour. If we need words, God will provide them. If we need guidance, God will provide it.

If we need insight and understanding, if we need wisdom, because we have a repository in our soul, the Holy Spirit will bring to our hearts and bring to our minds what we need. But we have to be those who love the appearing of the Lord, not love his appearing for what it will do for us, but love his appearing so that when we stand at the judgment, our lives will be a reflection of his glory and we'll receive his approval. Well done, thou good and faithful servant.

How many times did Jesus say, be watchful, be ready. You do not know at what hour your Lord will return. If you're a servant who says, my master delays his coming and begins to eat out of the pantry and beat his fellow servants, you become a hardship instead of a blessing and you're not ready.

You don't love the appearing of the master. You don't love the appearing. Remember the parable Jesus told about the vineyard that a man owned and he was going away and he hired

vine dressers to come in and run it and they began to serve themselves.

And so the owner sent back a servant to check on it and they beat up the servant and he eventually sends his son and he said, surely they will respect my son. But when the son came, they said, this is the heir. Let's do him a mischief.

What will it be like when the owner of that vineyard returns for those faithless stewards, those faithless vine dressers? We don't want to be anywhere near that scenario, but that's what happens when people are lovers of self, lovers of money, lovers of pleasure, rather than lovers of God. They will turn their ears from the truth that there is a coming judgment. And instead of being prepared and looking forward to that return, there is going to be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

People don't want to hear that. Don't want the responsibility of living our lives because we have been redeemed, not with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ. We have been bought at a price and we should live to glorify God, love his appearing.

So Timothy's part is to ensure that the truth is available and that it is preached faithfully and forcefully. That's why he doesn't just state it. He's not just ready, whether it is a good season or no season.

It's so fascinating. It doesn't say out of season. There's a perfectly good word for out of.

Ice is into, ek or x is out from. This is the alpha privative, whether it is a eukairos or an akairos. It's no time to be speaking the truth.

You'd be ready to speak it anyway. In season and out of season. Then he says, convince, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and teaching.

Long-suffering and teaching. This is a characterization where you can appeal to the intellect, you can appeal to the conscience, and you can appeal to the heart. And the function of the word of God for us individually is to call out our willful and self-gratifying behavior.

And to be fearless in communicating the word of God, where it clearly and emphatically proscribes behaviors, attitudes, actions, thoughts, and intents of the heart, words that are spoken. And it commends to us the way of righteousness. And to fearlessly and emphatically communicate it at whatever cost is the function of preachers in particular.

But all of us are here to represent the truth. And when the word of God specifies warning and rebuke, if we don't speak it, who will? If we don't reflect the word of truth in our conversations, in our relationships, in our own behavior, who's left? Well, let me hand you a brochure or send you a tract, or let me give you a good book on this subject is a dodge of responsibility. The reason we are in the relationships, the reason we are in contact with our fellow workers, with our friends, with our families is because we are the ones who are in place to reflect the truth in our lives, to communicate the truth in our conversation.

And if not us, who? And we so often think, well, that's somebody else needs to do that. And maybe it's an author of a book. Maybe it's somebody who is better spoken.

Maybe it's, well, I want to put you in touch with somebody who can do a better job than me. We are on site. We are the quick reaction platoon.

And it's in our lives. It is up to us. We need to be ready always to be standing by to speak the truth, to encourage people in the faith, to encourage them toward God through Christ and not be looking around, who can I find to do this for me? We should be ready and we should be leaning forward.

And if the occasion calls for a word from God that says, you can't persist in this path, this is not what the word of God teaches for believers. Make it clear. I know several people who are in this circumstance right now, including myself.

And we have to be faithful to communicate, not only the blessings and the positives and the opportunities that God offers through the Lord Jesus in his word and through his spirit, but also to communicate the correction and rebuke and what will happen at the appearing and the kingdom for those of us who are not prepared. If we are the five foolish virgins who let their lamp go out, if we come to the wedding feast without the provided garment, what is the consequence? There is a philosophy of education, and I hope it goes away with the department of education, that says you never speak a discouraging word. You never call out disobedience or failure to comply.

You never give someone a bad grade. If someone starts behaving badly, you step back, wait for them to wear themselves out. And as soon as they do something good, then applaud and reward and congratulate the good.

And it's all carrot and no stick. You never ever, you know, it's like home on the range. Never has heard a discouraging word.

The skies are not cloudy all day. The word of God is not that way. And we as representatives of the word can't be that way.

And this warning and rebuke and exhortation has to include what the word of God says about consequences, about the effects that happen when people are unfaithful. So we have here a responsibility. And sometimes even when we have a different type of spiritual gift, it involves not only a positive, beneficial, uplifting encouragement.

There are times when we are called to separate, to touch not the unclean thing, to hate the garment spotted by the flesh, to put distance between ourselves. Paul talks time and again. If some in the church are obstreperous, if they're not willing to pitch in, if they don't have a good attitude, we are not to sit down at the table with them.

With such a one, no, not to eat. And it is a truth of scripture that we have to make hard choices

about maintaining fellowship or maintaining distance. And that is why it's not just the pastor that convinces and rebukes and exhorts.

All of us who receive the word have to do the same thing. And there are consequences for choices. Bad choices lead to negative consequences.

And if we represent the Lord Jesus, are you going to try to win the Pharisees over with a smile? Or are you going to pronounce the woes on the Pharisees? And let them know what is going to happen at the judgment and in the kingdom. You will be cast out, Jesus told them, for your attitudes and your behavior. So convincing, this is an appeal to the intellect.

This is the persuasion side. Doesn't this make sense? Don't you see how this is consistent with the character of God, the plan of God, the purpose of God, with holiness and righteousness that is required of the people of God. So this is the convincing.

The rebuke, this is the downside. This is the negative side. And this is the stop what you are doing side.

The exhortation is fix your heart. The rebuke is more stop what you are doing. The exhortation is get at the source of the problem and encourage a change of mind and a change of heart.

This is where repentance is available. Change of mind comes about with a realization of need. I need to make a change.

This is wrong. Something's got to give, direction has to modify. That's what rebuke does is call out what is wrong.

The exhortation is the encouragement to the solution. Here is how to fix it. And you have this over and over again in scripture.

You don't end with rebuke that can lead people to despair. You can take away heart, take away hope. Well, I'm too far gone.

I'm enmeshed and mired. I've gone down a road of no return. But there should also be encouragement.

Here is the way. Here is the grace of God. Here is the provision and the power of God that can overcome.

Grace greater than all our sin. And one must necessarily accompany the other. That's why we saw it back in 316 of this same letter.

Scripture is given by inspiration of God, profitable for reproof, for correction, rebuke and exhortation. With all long-suffering, this is a wonderful attribute. And we're going to focus on this for a moment because every gift, every situation, every encounter, every relationship to which we are connected and for which we need a response needs these two things, long-

suffering and teaching.

Long-suffering is the word *macrothumia*, *macrothumia*. It is generally translated with one of two words, long-suffering or patience, patience. Interestingly, it never occurs in the gospels or acts.

Lord Jesus, in the Greek translation of His Aramaic teaching, it never occurs. The first occasion for *macrothumia* in the New Testament is Romans chapter 2, verse 4. You remember the flow there in Romans chapter 1 and 2. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against those who suppress the truth and unrighteousness. What may be known of God is manifest in creation.

And they willfully reject it. And then He goes in chapter 2 and says, And you, O man, don't have any business pointing a finger at them when there are three fingers pointing back at you. And Paul goes on to say there, Do you, O man, who are calling out others and are guilty yourself, do you despise the riches of His goodness? Forbearance and long-suffering.

If you're judging others, you are inexcusable. You judge another and you condemn yourself, because you who judge are practicing the same things. That's verse 1. We know the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things.

We're back to this idea of judgment. Paul, time and again, ties the judgment, present and future, to our current priorities, our current decisions and actions. Do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things and doing the same thing yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God? I charge you, Timothy, by the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead, by His appearing and by His kingdom.

That's what's on the line. What's going to happen at His appearing? Where will you be in the kingdom? Do you think that you will escape the judgment of God? Do you despise the riches of His goodness? Do you treat it lightly? Are you not worried about it? The riches of His goodness, His forbearance and *macrothumia*, His long-suffering. Not recognizing that the goodness of God is not in you, is not in you, is not in you.

This is what leads you to repentance. This is so interesting because when you get to Romans 9.22, which is the next instance of this word, you remember Romans 9, this is vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, remember? What if God, wanting to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much *macrothumia* the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? Go back to the previous use of the word in Romans 2, God's goodness, His forbearance, and His patience should be leading you to repentance. God is patient, He is hoping for, He is waiting for change of mind.

He is being patient, He is being long-suffering, He is being richly good to lead us to repentance. This is the positive side. I am hoping to draw you, God says, with goodness, forbearance, patience, *macrothumia*, to lead you to a change of mind.

Take that to Romans 9, verse 22. God is going to show His wrath and make His power known

and He is enduring with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction. That same patience, God is hoping these vessels of wrath will be led to repentance when they are made aware of impending destruction, of inevitable consequences.

Will this patience lead them to repentance? We know from Timothy that if someone who is headed for wrath and headed for judgment will cleanse himself, he will be a vessel of honor, fitted for every good use. We saw that back in 1 Timothy. So, what kind of patience should we have? As we present the truth, as we live out the truth, as we represent the truth in our lives and endeavor to reflect it and implement it in the exercise of our spiritual gift, we should do it with patience.

Look at what God puts up with. Look at the entrenched, vicious, vituperative evil that characterizes the world and God endures it with patience. Why? Some may hit rock bottom and may have a change of mind.

I don't want to judge them yet. I'm not going to judge them now. I'm not going to give up on them in the present.

I will endure with great patience even these that are disobedient and are currently a vessel of wrath fitted for destruction because there is a prospect of repentance. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against those who suppress the truth, who deny His power and Godhood, even though it is revealed in nature and revealed in Scripture and revealed through His people. But it takes a lot.

We're going to see in a future use of this word that it goes all the way back to the days of the flood. There are 14 uses of this word, *Macrothumea*, Romans 2.4, Romans 9.22, 2 Corinthians 6, verse 6, and this is given in a list of things by means of which God's will is accomplished in our lives. Paul says in verse 4, in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God, 2 Corinthians 6.4. We commend ourselves in all things as ministers of God.

This is not just Paul. This should be all of us. We all have ministry through the function of our gift and our presence as representatives of the Lord Jesus.

In everything we commend ourselves as ministers of God, in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings, by means of purity, by means of knowledge, by means of *Macrothumea*. This is one of the ways in which we commend ourselves as representatives of the Lord Jesus, as ministers of God. Notice the first part of this list is the circumstances in which we maintain this witness and testimony, this function.

And then the means by which it is accomplished picks up in verse 6. Whether we are in hardship, in opposition, in oppression, in persecution, by means of purity, creating me a clean heart, O God, renew a right spirit within me. We let God deal with our failures, with our problems, with our sins. And claim His grace in the cleansing blood of Christ for purity.

I've got to tend to me first. By means of purity, I can commend myself as a minister of God. In all of these different circumstances, including sleeplessness.

All of us have had these times of endurance. By means of purity, by means of knowledge, this is availing ourselves of the truth of God that Timothy is charged to preach. Preach the word.

There will come a time when they will not endure sound doctrine. They will depart from the truth and heap to themselves teachers who teach falsehood, tickle ears instead of rebuke and exhortation. By knowledge, by patience.

Got to be patient. What kind of patience? The kind of patience God has for people who currently populate the world and are complete rascals, are unendurable. It sparks righteous indignation when you see their words and view their actions and see their vicious, unkind, unconscionable, unfair, unrighteous attacks on those who are trying to do the right thing.

You just want to do something violent in response or meet them at their own level with equal vicious attack. We need the macro thumia. Macro means big.

It takes a lot of it. The same patience God exerts toward this world in letting it move forward, enduring with great macro thumia, those who are targets of His wrath, fitted for destruction. We need to commend ourselves as representatives, as those who have the answers if someone decides they want to seek God.

And it takes patience. Remember, this is one of the fruits of the Spirit. Our next passage is Galatians 5.22. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, macro thumia.

This is where we get it. This is how we implement it and reflect it and exercise it. It's a fruit of the Spirit.

That's why we've got to start with purity. We've got to start with knowledge, cleansing ourselves. This is the preparedness of heart that we've recently seen.

We need a prepared heart. This is how we do it. Claim God's cleansing grace for purity.

Reflect on the truth, knowledge of the Word of God. And then cultivate that fruit of the Spirit. Right after love, joy, and peace, patience, macro thumia.

Turn over to Colossians 1. Wonderful, wonderful letter, Colossians. He talks about the grace of God in truth at the end of verse 6. The hope that is laid up for you in heaven in verse 5. You heard this in the word of truth of the gospel. Hope laid up in heaven.

At His appearing, at the judgment, there is hope. That's Colossians 1.5. It has come to you as to all the world and brings forth fruit. Since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth.

Truth in verse 5, truth in verse 6. You learned it from Epaphras in verse 7. And he has testified your love in verse 8. For this reason, verse 9. Since the day we heard it, we do not cease to pray

for you. Ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will. In wisdom and spiritual understanding.

Knowledge, spiritual understanding. That you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing. Being fruitful in every good work.

And increasing in the knowledge of God. It doesn't just launch us, it sustains us. It enables and empowers us continually.

And on an ongoing basis. Look at verse 11. Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power.

For the purpose of patience and long-suffering. We've got two words for patience. And it's long-suffering here.

That's the makrothumia. Where does it come from? How do we get it? Paul tells Timothy, you can't be a pastor. If you can't teach with authority.

With emphasis. With force. With dedication.

With endurance. And with patience. As you teach.

All of us. Whatever our function. Whatever our opportunity.

Need makrothumia. And we get it. We are strengthened with all might.

Through the presence of the Spirit. And the power of God's word. For patience and long-suffering.

With joy. It's not a dark drudge. You think about the patience of God.

For the world. The vessels of wrath. You think about our necessity for patience.

With those who oppose. With those who misconstrue and twist. And misrepresent.

And pick and choose. Take things out of context. And it's frustrating.

And it tends to make us angry. We want to fight fire with fire. We want to get down at their level.

And then end up getting beaten with experience. With joy. We don't lose our peace.

When we get to the patience part. We don't lose the love. The joy.

And the peace. There's a reason for the order. The fruit of the Spirit.

In Galatians 5. 22 and 23. So we are strengthened with all might. For that patience.

So in Colossians chapter 3. Verse 12. Therefore as the chosen of God. Sanctified and beloved.

Put on tender mercies. Kindness. Humility.

Meekness. And macrothumia. Put it on.

You're chosen. You're sanctified. You're loved by God.

So cultivate. Put on. Dress yourself.

This is what people see when they see you. We get up in the morning. We choose our clothes based on what's going to happen that day.

Who's going to see us? What impression are we going to make? Put on. Clothe yourself with tender mercies. Kindness.

Humility. Meekness. Meekness is self-control.

And patience. Long-suffering. Paul in 1st Timothy.

We saw this in 1st Timothy chapter 1. Verse 16. He talked about his past. Persecuting the church.

Chief of sinners. However. For this reason I obtained mercy that in me first.

Jesus Christ might demonstrate all macrothumia. Look at the patience. That God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ exercised.

In waiting for Paul to come around. He made egregious mistakes. He was a Pharisee of the Pharisees.

And he persecuted and hounded the church of God. He held the garments while they stoned Stephen to death. Paul says I am an example of God's patience.

If God can be patient with me. Can't we be patient with each other. It's a pattern to those who are going to believe on him for everlasting life.

1st Timothy 1.16. We saw this in chapter 3 of our letter. 2nd Timothy 3.10. You have carefully followed my doctrine. My manner of life.

My purpose. My faith. My patience.

My macrothumia. With love and perseverance. Hebrews 6.12. Do not become sluggish.

But imitate those who through faith and patience, faith and macrothumia, inherit the promises. Our inheritance is on the line. Patience is required.

James 5.10. My brethren, look at the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord as an

example of suffering and macrothumia. They kept on prophesying. Jeremiah got thrown into a cistern.

Read Hebrews chapter 11 for the fate of the prophets who were rejected, stoned, hounded out, sawed in two as an example of macrothumia. Peter talks about the days of the flood in 1st Peter 3.20. Talking about the Lord Jesus preaching to the spirits who were imprisoned, who formerly were disobedient, when once the divine macrothumia waited in the days of Noah, when the ark was being prepared. 1st Peter 3.20. And finally, 2nd Peter 3.15. Consider that the macrothumia of our Lord is salvation, as our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you.

2nd Peter 3.15. You remember this? Looking forward to these things, looking forward to the judgment, to the appearing in the kingdom. Be diligent to be found in Him in peace, without spot and blameless. Consider the patience, the long-suffering of the Lord, is salvation.

It's a theme of Paul, and many twist it to their own destruction. He goes on to say, those are the 14 instances of macrothumia. How pertinent, how applicable for us in every circumstance, especially as we stand by ready to be of service, ready to be given in that hour what we should say, and what we should do as a witness and a testimony to those around us.

Well, this is a part of the charge. It is a part of our love for the Lord's appearing, to be one who shines and reflects the glory of Christ, at the judgment. We love His appearing.

We recognize that what we do should be motivated by the prospect of His appearing in His kingdom. Well, we'll continue in chapter 4 of 2 Timothy next time. We'll close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank You for the powerful motivation, the encouragement, the opportunity that we find in this passage and its parallels. We ask that God the Holy Spirit will help us to understand it and see its application, its pertinence in our own circumstances. Help us to live in a way that is pleasing in Your sight and glorifying to the Lord Jesus.

We ask it in His name. Amen.