

2Timothy 25-02-23a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace & Truth Bible Church. This is the 23rd of February, 2025. We are continuing our very fascinating and helpful excursion through 2 Timothy chapter four.

We have looked at this charge to Timothy in detail, which focuses on Timothy, his opportunities and responsibilities. And we are now going to move forward to Paul's personal report, his status, what his situation is beginning in verse six. We will take a brief review and summary of what we've seen in the first five verses and then move forward.

Let's ask God's blessing on our time of fellowship and study and we'll begin. Father, it is such a privilege to spend time together being refreshed and encouraged and nurtured through the truth of your word, through the ministry of gifts that you've distributed in our midst, the opportunity to intercede and give thanks for each other, to praise you for your answers to our prayers, your gracious provision and intervention in so many areas of our lives. We are held securely in your hands and we have no need to fear what the human environment may bring because you are with us, our savior, your son, the Lord Jesus represents us at your right hand and intercedes on our behalf.

We look forward to the manna from heaven that is here in this portion of your word and we ask your blessing on it that we will see its pertinence and application in our lives that we will be stronger, more united and even more fit as representatives of the Lord Jesus until the time of his return. We ask it in Jesus name, amen. You remember the vitality, the strength, the vigor that is reflected in this portion of Paul's letter to Timothy, where in chapter four, he charges him with responsibility for preaching the word.

He doesn't say, get out there and visit, encourage, go out and try to find new converts, go out and rouse the rabble when it comes to social issues, go down and see if you can overturn the slave industry or the Roman hegemony that exists in Ephesus because any righteous influence that believers have has to start from within. Physician, heal thyself is often true. We don't qualify to right the wrongs of the world or fix the ills in society or even endeavor to be a blessing to one another if we ourselves are not enabled and empowered, if we are not cleansed and purified, if we are not fit implements and tools in the master's hand, it is vain to try to do something or be something in human strength, with human wisdom, human ideas of success, it's vain.

This is the problem in so much of our modern Christianity, post-modern Christianity. Now we have, I understand, left post-modernism and we're in meta-modernism. And so in the meta-modern church, we are equally ill-equipped if God is not in charge, if we are not following his guidance, endeavoring to ensure that we ourselves are squared away and guiltless through the cleansing grace of God and the blood of Christ, then we can be useful.

Our spiritual gift will bless other believers. We can do the work of an evangelist, something we'll look at this morning. What does it mean to do the work of an evangelist? Whatever it is, whatever evangelizing is, whatever this word means, it involves work.

It isn't something that just is an influence by sitting and staring in a holy fashion into space, there is work involved. I want to first follow a suggestion we had from Brother Matthew last

week and read Kenneth Wuest's translation of these first verses in 2 Timothy chapter four. This is, if you've ever seen or had a set, there are word studies in the Greek New Testament.

And then he takes the fruit of his translation and interpretation efforts throughout those passages and has his own translation of the New Testament in its entirety. It's similar in some ways, if you've ever seen the Amplified New Testament, where there is an effort to bring out the richness that is found in not only the Greek vocabulary, but also the tenses, to bring out the meaning of a perfect or an imperative. If it's an aorist imperative or a present imperative, these things have different connotations in Greek.

So it's an expanded translation. That having been said, I conveniently destroyed my copy here and the pages started falling out. Somebody who knows how to bind books needs to work on this.

But the chapter begins in Wuest's translation this way. And if you like, you can look up from your own version or you can look at it, but listen to the force of the language:

"I solemnly charge you as one who is living in the presence of our God, even Christ Jesus, the one who is on the point of judging the living and the dead. I solemnly charge you as not only living in his presence, but also by his appearance and his kingdom, his appearing and his kingdom.

"Make a public proclamation of the word with such formality, gravity, and authority as must be heeded. Hold yourself in readiness for this proclamation when opportunity presents itself and when it does not. Reprove so as to bring forth conviction and confession of guilt. Rebuke sharply, severely, and with a suggestion of impending penalty. Pleadingly exhort, doing all this with that utmost self-restraint, which does not hastily retaliate a wrong, and accompany this exhortation with the most painstaking instruction.

"For the time will come when they will not endure our wholesome doctrine in that they will hold themselves firmly against it, but dominated by their own personal cravings, they, having ears that desire merely to be gratified, shall gather to themselves an accumulation of teachers. In fact, from the truth, they shall also avert their ear, and as a result, they shall receive a moral twist, which will cause them to believe that which is fictitious.

"But as for you, be constantly in a sober mood, calm, collected, wakeful, alert in all things, endure hardships. Let your work as a pastor be evangelistic in character. Your work of ministering fully perform in every detail.

"For as for myself, my life's blood is already being poured out as a libation. And the strategic time of my departure is already present. The desperate, straining, agonizing contest marked by its beauty of technique, I, like a wrestler, have fought to the finish, and at present am resting in its victory. My race, I, like a runner, have finished, and at present I am resting at the goal.

"The faith committed to my care, I, like a soldier, have kept safely through everlasting vigilance, and have delivered it again to my captain. Henceforth there is reserved for me the victor's laurel wreath of righteousness, which the Lord will award me on that day, the just umpire, the umpire who is always fair and never makes a mistake, and not only to me, but also to all those who have loved his appearing, and as a result have their love fixed on it."

You get the idea here of the urgency and the fervor with which Paul delivers this charge. He is passing the torch. He is handing the baton to the next runner who will execute his

function in this relay race. He says, I have finished my laps. I'm handing this to you. You continue this work.

And by extension, this is the work of all pastors and teachers in particular. But as an example, remember all of these elements, all of these imperatives apply to each and every one of us with regard to our presence, our testimony, our witness, our representation of the Lord Jesus Christ as his body on this earth, and the same attitude, the same approach, the same enablement, and the same focus on loving the Lord's appearing motivated by our hope. This is where we get hope as the motivation passages like this. It is looking forward in expectation and anticipation to the Lord's appearance and the implementation and arrival of his kingdom on this earth. That is what impels us. That is what encourages us.

That is what gives us endurance and a forward look and a reliance on the power that comes through the word and the spirit to accomplish our particular part of the mission. That having been said, Paul says, be watchful in all things. We saw this last time.

Endure afflictions. Do the work of an evangelist. Fulfill your ministry.

Be watchful. We did a study in times past on what the word means when it says watch and pray. What does the Lord require of you? Be watchful in all things.

Persevere when there is hardship. Keep on going. Do not be deterred.

Do not be set back. Do not be delayed or slowed or rendered ineffective or neutralized. Afflictions will come, but these momentary light afflictions, Paul says, are working for us an eternal weight of glory.

There is the strong suggestion that without the afflictions, it is not easy to find a path to the eternal weight of glory. Afflictions work that opportunity. Then he says, do the work of an evangelist.

We want to look at this a little bit because in our day, the work of an evangelist is thought to be give people the gospel. What is the gospel? Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. He was buried.

He was raised the third day according to the scriptures. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. We rightfully understand the gospel to be the good news of Jesus Christ.

There is eternal life through him. There is a relationship to the Father through him. But the gospel, when you find that term in a passage, is interpreted according to context.

The word by itself simply means good news. We saw a similar example. Remember when we looked at the Alma in Hebrew, and it's translated, behold, a virgin will conceive, and it's Alma.

There's also the word Betula. One of them intrinsically means a virgin. The other one means a young woman.

So you find the word interpreted or described as a young woman who has not known a man, which tells you the word by itself doesn't contain virginity. It just means young woman. If you want to say the young woman is a virgin, you either have to use the other Hebrew term that specifies a virgin or say she's a young woman who has not known a man.

If you say a virgin who has not known a man, it's redundant. In the same way, the word gospel, good news, is qualified or is limited or is directed at a particular meaning by accompanying phrases. So if you go to Matthew 4, verse 23, the Lord Jesus went throughout all Galilee teaching in their synagogues.

Now stop and think. This is context, right? The Lord Jesus goes through Galilee. Where is Galilee? What country is it a part of? This is Israel.

I am sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. So he's in Galilee, which is Israel. And 4.23 says he went throughout all Galilee.

Where did he primarily function? Where did he do his teaching? Teaching in their synagogues. In the same way that you look around in our culture, our nation, our community, some people go to church and some don't. If you wanted to communicate a spiritual truth from the Lord God about the Lord Jesus Christ, that is for the benefit of Christians, would you go to the town square or would you go to a church? You go where interested people congregate.

That's where you're going to find a receptive audience if there is one. So Jesus, it doesn't say he constantly went out in boats or constantly sat in hillsides waiting for a crowd to assemble. In the early days of his ministry, Matthew 4, he went to the synagogues.

This is what Paul would do when he went to areas of the Roman Empire that were outside Israel. He first went to the synagogues. Every new town, he went to a place where people who were interested in God assembled.

He went through Galilee teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel, the euangelion of what? The kingdom. This is the Lord Jesus preaching the gospel, proclaiming the gospel. Is he saying, I'm the Savior, I'm a few years hence going to be on the cross, I'm going to provide atonement, I'm the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world? Is this what Jesus preached in the synagogues? No, it is not.

Israel is viewed in broad strokes as the community of God's people, already related to God by covenant. So what does Jesus come and tell the lost sheep of the house of Israel? If they are lost sheep, it means they belong to the great shepherd, but they have strayed. They're not in the fold.

They are not under the care of the rod and the staff. They've wandered like the parable of the lost sheep in Luke, along about chapter 16, right? So they belong to God already. What is Jesus proclaiming to the lost sheep of the house of Israel exclusively? The gospel of the kingdom.

The gospel of the kingdom, the promised kingdom, the resurrection of the throne of David, the fallen tent will be redeployed. The promises of the old Testament prophets of peace,

deliverance from oppression, a kingdom where righteousness is at home, where they do not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain, all of the old Testament promises to those believers who paid attention and lived by faith. You've got the roster of some of the prominent ones in Hebrews chapter 11.

Jesus proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom. That is a particular piece of good news related to fulfillment of promises to God's faithful people in the old Testament. There is a condition.

All Israel is not Israel and Isaac will your seed be called. That is the line of inheritance. It doesn't mean if you're not descended from Isaac, you can't be saved, but the blessing goes through Isaac, Jacob and Esau.

I'm convinced that Esau was a believer just like Judas the disciple was a believer, but he didn't fritter away his future resurrection and eternal life. He frittered away inheritance. He still received a blessing from his father Isaac, but it was not that birthright.

It wasn't the fullness of blessing that was in Isaac's eyes mistakenly delivered to Jacob by deceit. Gospel of the kingdom. This is not a gospel of believe or you're going to the lake of fire.

Put your faith in the Lord Jesus for redemption and atonement and propitiation, reconciliation. This is a gospel of the kingdom. In delivering that message, what did he do? He healed every disease and every affliction among the people.

This is a harbinger. It is a foretaste of glory divine. It is a foretaste of what conditions will be like where suffering is ended.

Tears are dried. Death is eliminated in all but extreme cases. Jesus will even raise the dead in the course of preaching the gospel of the kingdom to Israel to reinforce and to authenticate that the time of God's promise fulfillment to them specifically under the covenant is at hand.

Same thing in Matthew 24 14 when he is talking about the future and the end times. This gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations. The gospel of the kingdom.

It doesn't say the gospel of Christ. It doesn't say the gospel of salvation. It doesn't say the gospel of redemption or atonement or deliverance from eternity in the lake of fire.

It is the gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed. What is the gospel of the kingdom? Whose kingdom is it? It is the promise to Israel. It is an Israelite kingdom with an Israelite throne with David and the sons of David sitting on its throne, including David's greater son, the Lord Jesus.

Isn't it interesting? This gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations. Fulfillment of promise to Israel is going to be a witness and a testimony to the Gentiles, to the Goyim, to the nations. Then the end will come.

Not Christ died for our sins. The kingdom of Israel is going to be the witness and the testimony. Mark 1.14 tells us that after John the Baptist was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming the gospel from God, the good news from God.

Jesus' identity as the son of God is not being proclaimed. When demons try to say, I know who you are, the Holy one of God, Jesus silences them. Jesus tells his own disciples, tell no one what you have seen on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Tell no one. It is not the time for the revelation of that information. So what is Jesus preaching? It's a gospel.

It's a gospel from God. It is to Israel, for Israel, about Israel. It is the gospel of the kingdom.

In the next verse, this is what Jesus said. Mark 1.15, the time is fulfilled. Hold that thought.

Put a yellow sticky on that statement. The time is fulfilled. There have been centuries and decades where the time was not fulfilled.

The time wasn't ripe. The time wasn't at hand, but now it is. Jesus tells Israel, the people in synagogues who are there to listen and there to learn, the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand.

That is the good news of God, the gospel of God. The kingdom is at hand. You need to change your mind and believe this good news.

It is not trust in me as your Passover, as your sacrifice, as the atonement for your sins. The cross is not in view. No one knows Jesus is going to the cross.

There is no sacrifice. There is no blood. There is no understanding whatsoever of what we typically call the gospel.

This is the good news of the kingdom. Israel has been languishing under oppression, hoping that the Romans will be driven out, looking at the promises of the prophets. So Jesus says, the time is fulfilled.

The days of oppression can end now. The implementation of God's kingdom promises, the resuscitation and resurrection of the times of David, the times of Solomon, the peaceable kingdom, they are at hand. If you are going to enter into it, you need to change your mind because you are thinking in earthly terms.

You're thinking in subjective terms. You're not ready. If they were ready, Jesus would not say, change your mind.

What does he say? Repent. Repent with the delivery of this good news. You are now facing a choice.

You can continue to think the way you have been thinking, or you can change your thinking, change your mind and place your faith in this good news. Be ready to accept the kingdom. Now, immediately, what do you know about a kingdom? There was a funny tweet.

I find it amusing how our current president manages to pull the chain of his detractors and opponents. And so he put out a picture of himself with a crown and he said, long live the king. He knew it would inflame them and drive them crazy.

And it's amusing to me that people are so easily led, but it is a reminder. What does a kingdom require to be a kingdom? A king domination. Dom is just short for dominate.

The king dominates, the king rules, kingdom, king rule. You need a king for a kingdom. So those who do change their mind, their next question is going to be, if the kingdom of God is at hand, where's the king? Who's the king? And it makes an issue of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If he is the one delivering the news, is he a John the Baptist who says there's one coming after me? Or is he the one? Jesus never says there is one coming after me and I will not be fit to tie his shoes. John the Baptist says that. When John is imprisoned, the Lord Jesus appears and he fulfills the prediction of John the Baptist.

And those who were paying attention have already begun to watch for the person John prophesied. Jesus says the kingdom is here and there's the strong implication. And by the way, I'm the king.

Repent and believe the good news. That's euangelion, that's the gospel. So in Luke chapter nine, verse six, when Jesus sends his disciples out, they departed and went through the villages preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.

Preaching what gospel? Not the modern day gospel the church is entrusted with. This is the gospel of the kingdom. It is the villages of Israel, only the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Come back to the fold, get ready for the benefits that come from the presence of the shepherd. Now, when you get to Paul and in months past, we looked at the unique charge to Paul as a steward of the mysteries. There is another kind of good news and this is Romans one 16.

I am not ashamed of the gospel. It is the power of God for salvation, not the power of God for the kingdom. Now, Paul is also going to preach the kingdom, but that just tells you that gospel can be applied to different things.

I'm not ashamed of the gospel. It is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes to the Jew first and also to the Greek. If it's to the Greek, then it's not a kingdom gospel.

It is a gospel of salvation. So this is the gospel he preached to the Corinthians and you find that in first Corinthians 15, one through 10, second Corinthians four, three, and four. If our euangelion, if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing in whom the God of this world has blinded the minds of those who believe not.

Lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God should shine unto them. Different kind of euangelion. Galatians one verses six and seven, I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and turning to a different euangelion, a different good message, a different gospel because there really isn't another one.

There is only one gospel for you Gentiles in the region of Galatia and it is the gospel of Christ. The gospel of the kingdom isn't pertinent for them. It's the gospel of Christ and you're turning away to a different one.

Deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ. Well, this illustrates the point that when we look here at our passage, do the work of a good news bringer. What kind of good news is Timothy to bring? If we by extension understand that there is a task, there is a calling, there is an opportunity, there is a charge to us to do the work of an evangelist, what is it? Well, we have to know what message is being referred to here.

What is the message? What does the gospel of Christ comprehend? What is in it? Certainly it is what Paul delivered to the Corinthians. Christ died for our sins. He was buried.

He was raised again the third day according to the scriptures. We talked about this when we went through 1 Corinthians, but I'll offer a quick review. Christ died for our sins.

Everybody understands that's the gospel and that he was buried. I could understand easily if that had been omitted. Christ died for our sins.

He was raised the third day. That's what you've got to believe to be saved. Why did Paul include the burial? Why do you think that's there? Christ, this is the gospel.

If you want it in summary, here it is. And that he was buried and that he rose again the third day in accordance with the Old Testament scriptures. In fulfillment of prophecy is what Paul says.

This was foreknown, foretold. Why the burial? We are going to see in our second session the concept of knowing the times and the seasons. Because Paul says, the time of my departure is at hand.

What is Paul's departure going to be? Is he leaving Rome and going to Brittany? Is he going to Gaul? Is he going to take a trip to Spain? What is his departure? What's he talking about? He is about to be executed. He is about to lose his physical life. That is his departure.

And he knows it is coming. It has been revealed to him by the Lord. Your mission is nearing completion.

Your race is over. Your fight is finished. He knows this.

And it's fascinating to read the rest of this chapter in that light. But Paul has a knowledge that he is going to die. Why is burial an essential part of the gospel? Because it is followed by resurrection.

And our physical death is not the end. This is a part of our salvation. It is a part of what we believe.

That if we perish, we will live again. Paul says in another place, I don't know if it's better for me to stay with you or depart. Departing would be wonderful.

But I think it's needful for me to remain. Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. So death ain't no big deal, as J.K.S. used to sing.

Burial, confidence that we will rise again, that when we fall asleep, we will be awakened, is intrinsic to our belief in Jesus Christ. If you don't believe in resurrection, if you don't believe that physical death is not the end, you're not saved. It isn't enough that sins are atoned for and there's a new and living way for this life.

Paul says if in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable. There is a life to come. And Jesus' burial is essential to his resurrection.

Our burial, in almost all cases, will precede our resurrection. So the good news is hope for the present, hope in and through physical death, whether it's us or our loved ones, and anticipation of the fulfillment of God's promises to us in the same way that his promises to Israel will be fulfilled. They were delayed because Israel failed to meet the condition for the fulfillment of that promise.

Promises are conditional. Every promise in the word of God is conditional, every single one that relates to us and our responsibility. The promise that Jesus is going to return, that's unconditional.

He's coming back regardless of what we do. But all of the ones that we can claim for personal application are conditional. God made a promise to Israel, didn't meet the condition, promise was not fulfilled.

It is the same with us. We by faith and patience inherit the promises, faith and patience. So that is part of the gospel that we represent, not just that Jesus Christ is the way to the Father, not just that there is reconciliation and redemption and atonement through Christ.

That is a very narrow and limited slice of the gospel that we are to proclaim by our presence, by our lives, by our faith, by our obedience. We are to represent the Lord Jesus who preached many gospels, all kinds of good news. We'll see more about this.

I will tease it now. Do you remember when John sends messengers and says, are you the coming one or do we wait for another? Remember Jesus' reply? He's quoting Old Testament prophecy and he says, the blind see, the lame walk, the deaf hear, I'm paraphrasing, and the gospel is preached to the poor. How come the gospel is only preached to the poor? Why is it preached to the blind and the deaf and the lame? The gospel is specifically preached to the poor.

That tells you something about the word gospel. There is a specific kind of good news for the poor. It's not just the gospel of Christ as Savior.

There is good news for those who are without possessions, for those who are hard up against it. A special good news. The gospel is preached to the poor.

Well, this informs us as to our purpose. If we're going to measure ourselves, if we're going to be ready for the judgment, how do we know we're doing a good job? Well, one of our primary responsibilities is to do the work of a good news representer, a good news foreteller, a good news representative. That's our job.

How well are we doing it? Well, you've got to know what the good news is to know how to represent it, how to communicate it, how to embody it, how to exemplify it. So that is the work of an evangelist and that is what fulfills our particular ministry. Diakonos, waiting tables, to be a deacon, to be a servant, to be one who ministers.

How do you fulfill that? How do you maximize the potential? Represent the good news. There is all kinds of good news and each of us is an example of the grace of God in place, enabling, empowering, providing, sustaining, encouraging, blessing, producing fruit of the Spirit. That is good news and we want to maximize our expression of it in this life.

Let's pause here and take our break. When we come back, we're going to move forward into verse 6. What does it mean to be poured out as a drink offering? The time of my departure is at hand. We'll see that when we come back.