Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Marks of the Faithful Preacher, Part 1
Scripture: 2 Timothy 4:1
Code: 55-20

Let's open our Bibles this morning for the study of God's Word to 2 Timothy chapter 4...2 Timothy chapter 4. In coming to chapter 4 we come to the last chapter of this tremendous epistle from the beloved Paul to his son in the faith, Timothy. This is a sacred chapter, sacred ground in many ways, precious territory. These are the last words ever penned by Paul. The chapter has to be filled with emotion. We can only imagine what was racing through the heart of Paul as with compelling words he beseeches Timothy to be faithful to his ministry. It's his final appeal, really, to the young man who is going to take his place. There is a changing of the guard about to take place. Paul will soon lose his life in martyrdom as his head is severed from his body. He must pass the baton to a young man who basically is timid, who can be intimidated, who is moral and virtuous but has not the strength of character, conviction, boldness of the Apostle Paul.

So Paul is compelled at this very late point in his life to give one final solemn charge to Timothy...not the only one, the last of many. Let's look at verses 1 to 5. Paul writing to this young Timothy in his late thirties about to take up the baton on his behalf says, "I solemnly charge you in the presence of God," and literally should read, "Even Christ Jesus who is about to judge the living and the dead and by His appearing and His Kingdom preach the Word. Be ready in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with great patience and instruction, for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine but wanting to have their ears tickled they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires and will turn away their ears from the truth and will be turned aside to myths. But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry."

In these five verses I believe we have a graphic portrait of a faithful preacher. We've entitled this "The marks of a faithful preacher." While it is Paul to Timothy, it is instruction to every preacher.

Now someone might be saying, "Well if this is instruction to the preacher, what reference does it have to us, the people?" And I would say while obviously it is directed from Paul to one who is responsible as a pastor and preacher, the implications to you are very very important. For whatever is true for the preacher, you must hold the preacher to. That is to say if you are doing your job as a congregation, you are demanding then that the preacher do the things that are written here in the performance of his duty. It is a point of accountability. For me publicly to affirm that I believe these things is to go on record as saying to you...hold me responsible for what I said I believe. The congregation, the people, the leadership of the church has the responsibility first to understand the calling of God, to understand

what He demands of His preachers and then hold them to it.

So this is to me, in one sense, to others who preach the Word of God, and yet in the very truest sense it is to be known by you who must hold us accountable. It serves then as a final summary not only to Timothy but as a final summary of the portrait of the faithful preacher for even myself and any who would proclaim the gospel of Christ. Paul is saying to Timothy, "You have to conform to the standard, there is a standard, you must conform to it."

I'll tell you, folks, the Bible is not nebulous about what God expects from the preacher. The Bible is not nebulous about what God expects from one who pastors His people. The Bible is very very explicit. The pattern is as obvious as it could possibly be and I am bound by that and you are bound to bind me to that.

There are in this particular five verses nine imperative verbs, that is nine commands. The text is exhortative in style. It lays demands on Timothy. They are not suggestions. They are not ideas. They are not points of discussion, they are commands. This is the pattern for the faithful preacher, this is his responsibility to fulfill, Timothy and all who stand in a like place.

Now I hope you understand that the role of the preacher is vital, that God has designed that His people be taught by gifted men, that they be proclaimed to by gifted men and that much of their spiritual life and their spiritual growth and their ministry function and their evangelism will be directly related and connected to the effectiveness of those whose preaching they are under. That's God's design. It's a serious issue with God that preachers be what God designed them to be, that people hold them to that, maintaining that accountability and that the people also respond to the proper preaching.

One of the sad things when you think about our nation today and where Protestant religion has gone is the demise of really faithful consistent uncompromising biblical preaching. And you can lay the blame at the preacher's feet, if you want, it certainly belongs there. But I'm convinced that it belongs not only at the feet of the preacher but at the feet of the people who fail to hold the preacher accountable for what God said he was to be. It's a dual responsibility.

Those of us who have profited through the years from reading Pilgrim's Progressand I'm sure there are a number of us here this morning, will remember that wonderful beginning of the Christian life upon which Pilgrim embarked when he went through the Wicket Gate. I read Pilgrim's Progressas a child, I read it again as a young man. I've read it twice as our family read it in the time our children were growing up. And I have read it periodically in points over the years. Pilgrim's Progressis an analogy or an allegory of the Christian life written by John Bunyan, the great English preacher who really wrote that from the Bedford Jail where he was imprisoned for preaching.

And as he tried to draw an allegory to paint the picture of the Christian life, he begins with Pilgrim who is the one who becomes a Christian, he enters through the narrow gate which he calls the Wicket Gate, and embarks upon the Christian journey. The first thing he is to do is to be taken to Interpreter's house because as you begin your Christian walk there's some things you have to know, some things have to be taught to you, interpreted for you so that your pilgrimage can be successful. So the first thing that happens to Pilgrim after he goes through the gate is a trip to Interpreter's house to learn the things that are necessary to have a successful spiritual journey.

When Pilgrim goes into Interpreter's house, the first thing that he is shown is a painting and it is a painting of the preacher. He is to see the portrait of the preacher at the very outset so that he understands the importance of that office, so that he understands how that man of God is set apart to assist him in his spiritual growth, his spiritual development. That new convert must be impressed with the importance of the man who proclaims the Word of the living God.

Now the painting of the preacher is quite interesting. Bunyan describes the preacher with these words, "He has eyes lifted to heaven. He has the best of books in his hand. He has the law of truth written upon his lips. The world was behind his back. He had a posture as if pleading with men on a crown of gold did hang over his head." What a picture. His eyes were lifted toward heaven. The best of books in his hand. The law of truth written on his lips. The world behind his back. A posture of pleading with men. And a crown of gold hanging over his head. The picture of the preacher.

Paul paints such a picture here not with a brush but like Bunyan with words. Only this one is inspired by God. This portrait of the preacher is equally instructive and much more binding. And the crucial aspect of the preacher's role is delineated here in unmistakable terms. It's important that you understand them because you want to understand the obligation of the preacher, you want to realize the important role that biblical preachers, teachers, pastors play in your life. It's very much an essential.

And what Paul writes here, I believe, he writes with deep emotion, as I said a few moments ago. He writes with a compelling spirit because he's coming to the end of his life. He is a prisoner. He's older now. The work on earth is passed. In this very chapter he will say in verse 7, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course." He recognizes that he is at the end of his ministry in this world and he is tremendously impassioned that Timothy carry it on. And so he affirms in these five verses that Timothy must be faithful and he sets the standard by which his faithfulness will be measured.

Now I might note to you that this is not the only appeal to Timothy. Paul has appealed to Timothy all through this epistle. He appealed to him in chapter 1 strongly. Verse 6, "I remind you, kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands." "God has not given us a spirit of timidity." "Do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of His prisoner, but join with me in

suffering for the gospel."

He appeals to him in verse 13 of that chapter, "Guard the standard of sound words which you have heard from me." He appeals to him in chapter 2 verse 1, "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, the things you've heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." Verse 8, "Remember Jesus Christ." Verse 14, "Remind them of these things, solemnly charge them in the presence of God." Chapter 3 verse 14, "Continue in the things you've learned, become convinced of." Many appeals to Timothy here...many.

But this is the sum of them all. This is the wrap up. This is Paul's final words. And this chapter is the last chapter Paul ever wrote...the last chapter he ever wrote. And then his life ended. It sums up his hopes for every Christian preacher, every pastor, every minister of Christ. In many ways it's going to be tougher on Timothy than it was on Paul. As I said a moment ago, Timothy didn't have the strength of constitution that Paul had and yet Timothy was facing a tougher road in some ways.

What do you mean? Well the church had already begun to defect spiritually. When Paul founded Ephesus it was in the heat of revival. There was enthusiasm and energy and excitement, the thrills were there. Now a number of years have passed and the church in Ephesus where Timothy is now laboring as he receives the letter has already begun a spiritual decline. They've already descended into spiritual error and spiritual defection in their living. Sound doctrine has begun to lose its primacy, godliness is not the main thing anymore. And the decline has already set in which makes the burden even more difficult for Timothy to bear.

Additionally, a rampant wholesale empire-wide persecution is beginning to foment which can potentially catch up Timothy and cost him his life. It's not an easy ministry ahead of Timothy. But he must be faithful. In order for him to be faithful he needs to clearly understand the elements, the marks of a faithful preacher. Paul gives him eight of them...eight of them. This morning I want only to deal with one of them. And I say that because it's so important that it would be unfair to that very principle itself to dilute it by even bringing up the second one as important as it is.

The first element in the portrait comes in verse 1, and we have titled it, "The seriousness of his commission." There are many elements to this particular charge, the first one is that Timothy must understand the seriousness of his commission. "I solemnly charge you, Paul says, in the presence of God, even Christ Jesus, who is about to judge the living and the dead and by His appearing and His Kingdom."

Now that verse...we'll stop at that point and discuss this morning. That speaks of the seriousness of the issue of ministry. It begins with the verb, diamarturomai, I solemnly charge, one word in the Greek, a strong word, it means earnest testimony, solemn commands, strong urging, all inherent in that word. The aged warrior Paul wanting to give the responsibility fires a parting charge at his young

son in the faith that carries all the solemnity and seriousness that one could expect from a godly Apostle whose life was totally committed to the service of Christ and wanted that to be the commitment of his son in the faith. He is not unlike John Knox who on the one hand said, "Give me Scotland or I die," and on the other hand when compelled to preach went into his room, locked himself up and wept for days because of the fearfulness of the seriousness of such a calling.

Timothy must know the seriousness of his calling. That seriousness is tied directly to the one in whose view and under whose judgment he serves. Anyone called to preach, anyone called to articulate the Word of God takes on a serious responsibility. In James 3:1 where James is discussing the matter of the tongue, he says, "Stop being so many teachers for theirs is a greater condemnation." Why? Because the man who doesn't offend with his tongue is a perfect man and there is no such thing...you're going to offend with your tongue, now you want to be sure that you don't rush into the preaching/teaching ministry and then offend with your tongue because your offense is scattered so far and wide that your judgment will be greater. It's a serious place, it's a serious ministry. It is a ministry for those who take seriously its tasks.

The whole tone of this charge doesn't look back, it looks forward and it looks forward to the Second Coming of Christ. We labor, in a sense, in view of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. That is the compelling element here. That's what Paul wants Timothy to grasp. There is an accounting coming. There is a facing of the judge coming where we have to give an account for the ministry. Every preacher is directly responsible not to a church, not to a board, not to a denomination, not to an organization that ordained him or a school that trained him. Every preacher is directly accountable to the judge who is none other than God, even Christ Jesus.

Now let's look specifically at the elements of the charge. They're so very very important. "I solemnly charge you," he says, "in the presence of God, even Christ Jesus." Now the word in some of your Bibles is "and" Christ Jesus, in fact I think some of them say "And the Lord Jesus Christ." The proper rendering of the text is "And of Christ Jesus." The word "and," however, can mean, but, and or even. And according to the Greek form and construction here, it seems best to translate it as "even." Use then to cause the terms Christ Jesus to be descriptive of the name God...so he is charging Timothy in the presence of God, the God who is Christ Jesus...even Christ Jesus. The sentence structure favors that although you cannot be dogmatic, it could be in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus both. But I prefer God, even Christ Jesus. Particularly not only because of the linguistic opportunity to do that but because of the theology of it. It says, "...who is to judge the living and the dead." And the one who is to judge the living and the dead is Christ Jesus. So it seems to make simple sense to say, "In the presence of God, even Christ Jesus who is to judge."

Now we know that God has ordained Jesus as the judge. John 5:22 says He has committed all judgment to the Son. The Son, the Lord Jesus Christ is the judge. From a linguistic viewpoint we can translate "even Christ Jesus," from a theological viewpoint it makes sense as well because He indeed

is the judge. So there's an affirmation here of the deity of Christ, there's an affirmation here of the judgment duty of Christ. Both of those are significant.

The solemn charge here parallels a common format used in court cases. Let me tell you what I mean. When it says, "I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus," it takes a format that was used in the typical subpoenas, legal documents of ancient times. For example, we have found, archaeologists have, ancient documents, one of them reads like this, this is a document given to a person who is to come to court, it says, "The case will be drawn up against you in the court at Hieracleopolis(?) in the presence of..." and it names the judge. Very similar terminology to here. Paul then is using legal terminology, the terminology of a subpoena, the terminology that called people into court. And what he is saying here is, "The case will be drawn up against you in the court of God, even Christ Jesus who is the judge and the time is at His appearing and His Kingdom." It's a solemn subpoena for the preacher to come to court to face the adjudication of God with reference to His ministry.

But there's more than that. There's more than just the statement that God is the judge, God in Christ, there's more than that, notice this, "I charge you in the presence of God even Christ Jesus who is to judge the living and the dead." The other added element is not only is God even Christ Jesus our Lord to be the judge, but your ministry right now is going on in His...what?...His presence. That's very unusual. Typically when you're subpoenaed to go to court and you go to court for some kind of a trial, everybody comes into court with the perspective of trying to tell the judge what he doesn't know. True? So, plaintiff comes in, presents a case...defendant comes in, presents the case...everybody pleads...Judge, this is what happened, this is what happened, this is what happened, then this happened, then this happened, here are the facts, here's the data, here's the situation. And the next group...here's what happened, here's what happened, here's what happened, this happened, then that happened...cross examination. Well, Judge, we think this happened....No, we think this happened...that meant this...this meant this...this meant the other...bring in all the expert testimony, how does this work...how does this happen? All the cross examination, all the argumentation, and every bit of it is to assist the judge in a court where the judge is making the decision to convince the judge of what he otherwise wouldn't know.

Not so with Christ. When those of us who face Jesus Christ face Him...and that means everybody in the world, all the living and the dead, we'll see about that in a moment...when we face Christ there will be nothing that He does not...what?...know. Nothing. There will be nobody to come in and testify against us. There will be nobody to come in and testify on our behalf. There will be no need to rehearse the facts. There will be no opportunity to say, "But...but...but, Lord, You don't understand that...see...see, the reason I wasn't very faithful was...well, it was my wife...or, well, Lord, they paid me so little...Lord, You just don't understand, I mean I was having a lot of struggles over..." No, there won't be any need for that. "Lord, You didn't understand this, You see, you didn't remember about that event over there that caused this..." There won't be any of that. You won't have to explain

anything, all the facts will be there.

That's really a quite compelling thing to realize that the one who will be the eternal judge is the one who presently is aware of every single detail of every single life of every single human being. Nobody is going to have to rehearse anything to Him, He knows it all. There won't be any lawyers there. There won't be any advocates there. There won't be any witnesses there. Doesn't need to be. Nobody will bring any information in. There won't be any exhibits brought to the court, nothing. He'll know everything. He knows it instantaneously. And as He is recording it all in His book, it's all there for documentation. God doesn't write it in His book, the book mentioned in Revelation 20, so that He'll remember it, He writes it in the book so that all eternity will swear as to its veracity.

So here we do our ministry then in full view of the one who ultimately will judge. That's compelling...that is compelling. God even Christ Jesus is watching, we are in full view of Him who is very God the sovereign one to whom all judgment has been committed. What a compelling compelling thing that is to think about. I'm not serving in view of men, I'm serving in view of God.

In 1 Timothy chapter 5 the first such compelling charge was given to Timothy. This is the third. The first one came in 1 Timothy 5 verse 21. Paul said to Timothy, "I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels to maintain these principles." And there's that compelling again. Hey, what you do you do in full view of the God who will be your judge. He doesn't mention that God is the judge there in verse 21, he just says you're doing it in view of God. Chapter 6 verse 13 again, "I charge you in the presence of God who gives life to all things and of Christ Jesus who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." Now he starts to make it more compelling, he does talk about the appearing of Christ. Then in 2 Timothy 4 verse 1, the appearing when He will judge. This is the third solemn compelling charge to Timothy related to the presence of God in Christ who is to be the judge.

A compelling seriousness of what we do, beloved, has reference to the fact that God will be in Christ our judge and He will have seen everything...everything. Not one month of my life escapes Him, not one week, not one day, not one hour, not one minute, not a second of my life escapes the vision of Christ. He knows what I do with my time. He knows what I do with my energies. He knows what I do with every opportunity and I am accountable to Him for that. That's compelling...that's compelling.

"I solemnly charge you in the presence of God even Christ Jesus...notice...who is to judge the living and the dead." He's the judge. The word "judge" here from krinois not the strong word of damnation and condemnation, it's the word of evaluation. It's the word from which we get the word "criteria or criterion or critic." It's an evaluation. Paul says to Timothy, the Lord is going to evaluate you and He'll have all the information because of His omniscience, He knows everything. You notice who is to judge, "the one about to judge" is what it really means, or "the one who is on the brink of judging," or

"the one who momentarily will judge." And it wants to paint to Timothy an imminency kind of thing that it could happen at any time. God is about to do that. It's...your...it's on the brink of happening. God will judge in Christ.

Now the one who is to judge is none other than Christ. I mentioned John 5:22, it says in that passage, let me just read you a couple of verses there, "For not even the Father judges anyone but He has given all judgment to the Son." Very important. Verse 26, "Just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son to have life in Himself and He gave Him authority to execute judgment because He is the Son of God." All judgment has been committed to Christ. And there's a day coming when He will evaluate. Now keep in mind that the word used here in 2 Timothy 4, krinan(?)the verb form in its infinitive, means to evaluate. It's not damnation because it's not that we're going to be damned for failure if we're already saved, it's that we're going to be evaluated...we're going to be evaluated. And our evaluation is going to determine our reward and our reward is going to determine the level of our service in heaven.

If you've been with us for our series in heaven which just ended, you know we discussed that. The Bible promises certain crowns to the believer. I believe all those crowns are really parallels to eternal life in heaven, they're just different ways to express the fullness of our eternal life. It says that in 1 Corinthians 3 some of our works are gold, silver, precious stones, they'll last. Some are wood, hay and stubble, they'll be burned up. But each of us will receive a reward. That's the kind of judgment we're talking about..the Judgment Seat of Christ. We must all, says Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:9 and 10, appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ to receive the reward for the things that we've done, whether they're good or useless. The useless things are burned up. For the good things we did in serving Him we will be rewarded. That reward will be demonstrated through all the Kingdom and through all eternity in our capacity to serve and in the level of our assignment in that service. I told you in the series on heaven that I believe that the concept of inheritance has to do with the breadth of our authority throughout eternity and the concept of rewards has to do with the nature of our service in eternity.

That's the issue here. You will be evaluated by the God who judges everybody, the God in Christ who judges everybody will evaluate you. He will evaluate you.

Paul lived in the light of that. He really did. So did the other Apostles. Peter, do you remember in Acts when he was preaching, Peter was, to Cornelius in Acts 10:42, Peter says, "He ordered us to preach the gospel to the people and solemnly to testify that this is the one who has been appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead." Peter says we were ordained to preach...to preach judgment, to preach the judge who was going to judge the living and the dead. That's why he was so compelled. That was compelling to him.

In Acts 17 the Apostle Paul, Mars Hill, "God has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead." That man is Christ...that man is Christ.

God will judge the living and the dead, Peter said. God will judge the living and the dead Paul said. The whole world through the man Christ Jesus. In Romans 2:16 Paul writes, "There's a day coming when according to My gospel God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus...through Christ Jesus."

So the compelling reality here is the coming evaluation. In 1 Corinthians you probably have the best sum of it, it's a familiar text, 4:1 to 5, listen, Paul writes, "Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ, stewards of the mysteries of God. In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy but to me it's a very small thing that I should be examined by you or by any human court, in fact I don't even examine myself. I'm not my judge. I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted, but the one who examines me is the Lord. Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time." What time? The time of judgment. "But wait till the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts and then each man's praise will come to him from God." And the implication is it shouldn't come to him from men. You people are out there evaluating the quality of these pastors and these preachers and you don't know their hearts and you don't know their motives. And even when you don't know anything against them and even when they don't know anything against them, God may know something against them by which His verdict on their ministry would be different than yours. So wait before you pass out the kudos and the congratulations until God reads the hearts and then each man's praise will come to him from God. And for Paul that was compelling.

He wrote the Galatians and says in chapter 1 verse 10, he was accused of being a man pleaser and he wanted to deny that in no uncertain terms so in Galatians 1:10 he said, "For am I now seeking the favor of men or of God? Am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men I wouldn't be the bondservant of Christ." I'm trying to please Christ. He's the judge who sees everything, who knows everything. That's compelling. And I must stand before Him.

Now what does it mean "the living and the dead," why does he say the one who judges or will judge the living and the dead? Some say that could mean the saved and the lost. I think it means exactly what it says...the living and the dead. And the big picture, the Christ who will evaluate my ministry and reward me accordingly and deprive me of reward accordingly, the Christ who evaluates my ministry is the very one who will judge all the living and all the dead. Death doesn't cause a man to escape that judgment. Life doesn't cause a man to escape that judgment. The living and the dead, that's just the category into which all people who have ever lived must fall. They're either living now or dead. And they will be when Christ comes. But having died will not escape His judgment.

In the Great White Throne Judgment it says that all the sea and the earth and the graves give up their dead and they come to the throne to be judged. The living will have already been judged. As you look ahead at judgment, when the Lord takes the church out of the world, there's a criteria time, there's an evaluation time. We call that the Bema Seat, the Judgment Seat of Christ where He evaluates our service and rewards us accordingly. It's not a condemnation of Christians, a damnation, because our condemnation was borne by Christ, He suffered for us. So we are free from condemnation, Romans 8, no condemnation in Christ to those who walk in the Spirit, that's us who have been redeemed. So we'll have a reward time, that's the first point of judgment in the end. That's a judgment for believers only. Then comes a judgment on believers and unbelievers called the judgment of the sheep and goats where He separates the unbelievers from the believers, the believers go into the Kingdom, the unbelievers go out of it.

Then the final one is for only unbelievers. It starts with believers, then believers and unbelievers, then only unbelievers. The Great White Throne is a judgment only on unbelievers. But whether men are alive at the time of that middle judgment, whether they are alive at the end of the Kingdom, or whether they are dead, they'll all be judged. That's why we teach that there will be resurrection of the ungodly. Do you realize that all the unsaved people who have ever lived will be resurrected and brought to the Great White Throne? Read it, Revelation 20:11 to 15. He will bring all the dead of all the ages before His throne to be judged and condemned to hell.

So Christ is the judge of those who are alive, those who are dead. And as such who judges all, He will judge you, Timothy, He will judge you. And He will judge you with perfect knowledge of everything you've done.

Then he adds this, "And by His appearing in His Kingdom." That's the point in time at which the judgment takes place, it takes place when Christ comes, appears and sets up His Kingdom. That's consistent with what the Scriptures teach. It's very general here, His appearing is His epiphaneia, His appearing, HIs Second Coming when the world sees Him, when every eye beholds Him. He comes, He sets up His Kingdom. That's when judgment takes place. And it comes in many forms. From the time when Christ raptures the church out until He sets up the eternal state, there are many judgments going on and He's the judge in all of them. They start with His appearing, they flow through His Kingdom. That's the point in time to which we must look for that judgment.

And even though when the church is raptured out and ours is a secret reward time, our rewards then will be on full display before the whole world during the Kingdom when we return for the glorious Kingdom. So we will receive those rewards in a secret place, the world will not see us. But then in the glorious liberation of the children of God, we return to reign with Christ on earth and the full display of His rewards for our service will be made. It comes at His appearing and His Kingdom.

That word "appearing" is a powerful thought. It literally means to appear upon, to appear, epi upon..."to appear upon the earth" is the idea. It's of great significance to Paul. He was motivated so strongly in light of the appearing of Christ. He moved toward that. Earlier as I read in 1 Timothy 6:14 he told Timothy, "Do what you do until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." Here in this very chapter, verse 8, 2 Timothy 4:8 he says, "In the future is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge will award me on that day, the day He comes, not only to me also those who loved His appearing when He comes," that's the day...that's the day. Titus 2:13, "Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Christ Jesus."

Now what is the significance of this epiphaneia, this appearing. Well, it's an interesting word. It was used, first of all, for the manifestation of some deity by the Greeks, some manifest intervention of a deity was called an epiphaneia. But far more commonly was its use especially in connection with the Roman emperor. Whenever the Roman emperor came to a village or a town it was called an epiphaneia. In fact, when he exceeded to the throne it was his epiphaneia. But it was used to describe the visit of an emperor to a village or a town. In any place he would go he was to make an appearance. That's pretty common even in English. He was to make his epiphaneia. And when he was planning to come to a little village, he was due to be in a certain place, they would clean the town and they would whitewash the buildings or whatever they did, they would sweep the streets, haul the drunks out of there, clean up the place, put on their best front...the emperor was going to appear. Everything was swept and made ready, all work was up to date, everything was scoured and cleaned to be fit for the appearing of the emperor.

And what Paul is saying to Timothy is the same idea. He's saying, you know what happens in a town that's expecting the emperor, well you are expecting the epiphaneiaof Christ Jesus, do what you do in such a way that He's pleased when He sees it, when He appears. Nothing could be more thrilling to a little person, peasant in a town who had done his work to be able to show it to the emperor when he did his appearing and be commended, and so it is with Christ. Some day He will appear and we desire to be commended by Him. He appears to set up His Kingdom. He's coming to judge, He's coming to reign. He will appear as the judge, He will reign as the King. All falsehoods will be revealed. All sinners will be judged. All believers will be rewarded. The godly will be ushered into the Kingdom. The ungodly will be cast out. Everything will be accounted for at that time. The preacher is to be faithful until them...until then, or until the Lord calls him home before that time. But if he's been faithful, he'll be properly rewarded as he shares in the glories and the joys of the coming of the King in His Kingdom.

Those of us who go to heaven are rewarded there. We'll come back displaying our rewards, as I said, on the earth during the Kingdom. What a great thought..what a great thought.

The compelling thing here, beloved, is that the preacher must realize the seriousness of his task. It is a serious duty we perform. And we must be committed to consummate dedication because it's so serious. And what makes it so serious is the scrutiny of the one who is the judge...who will evaluate it. The perfect judge will render perfect judgment on the nature, the dedication, the faithfulness, the consistency of the preacher's efforts. It's testing time to see whether what we did was gold, silver, precious stones or wood, hay and stubble.

You can be pushed in this world to compromise your ministry to try to please men. It happens all the time. I was listening, as I came in, on the radio today and there was a reporter from Time Magazine, the religion writer. He was reporting on the upcoming national convention of the Methodist denomination, second largest denomination, Protestant denomination in America next to the Southern Baptists. The major issue at the Methodist denomination is whether or not to ordain homosexuals to the pastorate. They have been fighting this battle for a long time and he was saying basically that the major thrust of the denomination is to remove all bans, they've already removed the ban on women, this would open it to lesbians and homosexual men to be in pastorates. There's a group of people, a coalition of pastors who protest this, headed up by some in Houston, who are endeavoring to be heard in the midst of this din of advocacy of homosexual rights and they're trying to lobby against the mass vote of the convention to try to conform to the Scripture which identifies homosexuality as a sin. The reporter said, basically, the great mass of pastors in the Methodist denomination are for what the denomination is doing to one degree or another.

At the time I thought to myself...it's incredible, it's incredible that how they in acquiescing to the wishes of a class of sinners that the Bible describes as reprobate, Romans 1, they have literally turned out to be men pleasers and they will have to account to the living God for that. Frightening...frightening.

Sometimes the pressure even comes on me in interesting ways. This week I picked up a journal produced by a seminary in our country. One...I looked down the list of articles and was shocked to see the third article as titled, "The Anti-Semitism of John MacArthur." I proceeded to read the article and the article said that I was anti-Semitic because I stated publicly on numerous occasions that the Jews rejected their Messiah, that Judaism as a religion was extinct since the death and resurrection of Christ in the new covenant, that the Jewish people cried for the blood of Christ and are responsible for forcing His death, though it occurred at the hands of the Romans, that I said that Jesus spoke against the Jewish leaders in Scripture. And all of this went page after page after page after page, affirming that I was anti-Semitic because I said that.

I didn't say that because I am anti-Semitic, I'm not anti- Semitic at all. I said that because that's what the Bible says. I said that because that's the truth. And you have to understand that that's what I have to say because that's what the Bible says and I'm answerable to God to say what the Bible says. I have great love for God's people Israel. I have great love for the Israel that is not God's

people and great compassion for their salvation.

The pressure is applied a lot of ways to compromise. The article was funded by The Vidal Sassoon Institute for Anti- Semitism of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem under the direction of two of the leading rabbis who funded a study of my teaching which they term anti-Semitic. The article prior to mine in that journal was an article on "The Advocacy of Creating Harmony, Dialogue, Brotherhood Among Christians and Jews." That's the mentality.

I would love nothing better than to have harmony, camaraderie, brotherhood among Christians and Jews around the person of Christ, but apart from Him you can't have it. But there are people who have succumbed to the social pressure to the point where they deny the Scripture. The Scripture is no longer the authority. They would rather please men. It comes in many ways, I don't even tell you all the things that happen to me because I don't think you could probably handle all of them week in and week out, but it's not easy to just hold the line unless you know why you're doing it. And if you understand who you're answerable to, it makes a lot of difference, huh? And to whom you must give an account when accounting time comes.

Timothy needed to understand it was a serious commission because he was going to get a lot of pressure to compromise it and to please men, you always do...you always do. But if you please God, you're going to be way ahead because in the day of the epiphaneiaof Jesus Christ, in the day when he enters into His Kingdom, He's going to reward you in a glorious way and you're going to enter in to the joy of the Lord that comes to one who served Him faithfully.

We need your prayers. It's not easy. We need your prayers regularly and daily. All I want to do and all the others who are part of our church leadership here, other pastors want to do is be faithful to God's truth, to teach God's Word. We're not trying to advocate some anti view. I feel like Paul. They should listen to the tape on Romans 9 and 10, my heart's desire for Israel is their salvation, says Paul. He says, "I could wish myself accursed for their salvation." And yet he's the same Paul who castigated their unbelief. If you teach a biblical message, the pressure's on. But if you have a perspective that says God is the judge, it keeps you on track.

The preacher must understand, first of all, the seriousness of his commission. That's where we start. Next one is dealing with that great statement "preach the Word" and that's one of the most powerful ones in this entire text. We'll dig into that next time. Let's pray.

In this text, Lord, we know that it ends up in verse 5 with Paul's word to Timothy, a command, "Fulfill your ministry." And we know, Lord, that it ends in fulfillment but it begins in motivation. And the motivation that ends in fulfillment has to be the motivation indicated in verse 1, a compelling sense of responsibility to the divine judge, our Lord Jesus Christ, to fulfill the duty to which we're called. We understand what Paul meant when he said, "Don't commend me for preaching, woe is unto me if I

preach not the gospel, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel." He was a man compelled. He was a man who didn't even choose to do what he did, he was chosen to do it by You and then held responsible for his faithfulness.

I pray, Lord, that You'll raise up a generation of faithful preachers who will take the solemn charge in the presence of God, even Christ Jesus, the one who is to judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His coming to set up His Kingdom to preach the Word, uncompromisingly, unhesitatingly and boldly. And yet, Lord, help us, too, to have the compassion of Christ, the kind heartedness, the meekness, the gentleness, the graciousness, to have the mercy, the quietness, the patience, the sweetness of spirit to balance that conviction with the tenderness it takes to touch the lives of people. Help us not to be defensive, ungracious, unkind in spirit though we must speak the truth. And help us to be accountable and to hold each other accountable to the one who is our judge, even our Lord Jesus Christ who will judge with perfect equity, who will judge with perfect justice, who will judge with perfect righteousness and therein reward His servants. We long for the full reward that we may spend eternity serving to the maximum capacity the one who gave His life for us, our Lord Jesus Christ in whose name we pray. Amen.

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