

The fifth and final command in 2 Timothy concerning the Word is a high point in the letter: Proclaim the Word. Christians today need to hear and heed this command as much as did Timothy. Churches and Christian ministries have drifted away both from proclamation and from the Word. Doing good things is not enough, if we fail to obey God. Three questions will challenge you and test your perspective on this command. It will help you see its importance and centrality.

**I. How serious did Paul consider this command? (4:1)**

1. *He gave it as a charge.* A charge was made when taking an oath or calling upon a witness to speak the truth.
2. *He gave the charge in the presence of God and Jesus Christ.* They functioned as divine witnesses who could judge even the intents and motives, who would hold each person accountable, but who also could help fulfil the charge.
3. *He gave the charge in light of Christ's role as judge of the living and dead.* All judgment is given to Jesus (John 5:22). He will judge the works of believers (2 Cor 5:10) who will gain reward or suffer loss. He will judge unbelievers at the Great White Throne judgment (Rev 20:11-15). Because they have not believed, their names are not in the Book of Life and they will be cast into hell and punished according to their works.
4. *He gave the charge in accord with the appearing of Jesus Christ.* We will stand before Him and suffer shame if we have not obeyed His word. How will we feel then? Will we be ashamed or not? If we have the word and have not obeyed it, we will be ashamed (1 John 2:28).
5. *He gave the charge in accord with His kingdom.* Christ's kingdom is a kingdom of righteous. Without the righteousness of Christ no one can enter the kingdom and the child of God should conform to the righteous character of God.

**II. What exactly should Timothy or any man of God be doing? (4:2)**

Paul's charge applies in some degree to all who have the Word, so it is important to know the task.

1. *The task: Proclaim the Word.* To proclaim (or preach) means to herald or announce a message. The herald does not invent the message, nor is free to change it. Neither herald nor audience can debate it. We are to announce what our heavenly Father has said. That requires knowing and understanding it.
2. *The preparation: Be always ready with the Word.* The herald proclaims the message whether the time is convenient for him or not.
3. *The goal: Aim for life-change.* We proclaim the word with the goal of bringing believers to spiritual maturity and the unbeliever to faith in Christ. We use the Word of God to point out what is wrong and how to live right.
4. *The method: speak with consideration.* Because people tend to resist change and misunderstand what is new or different, proclamation requires great patience and careful instruction.

**III. Why should you be personally concerned? (4:3–8)**

1. The world and some professing believers will try to stop you from obeying God.
  - a. The time will come when men will not put up with healthy teaching (4:3). People illogically resist healthy food as well as healthy teaching.
  - b. People will instead gather around themselves teachers who say to them the pleasant things they want to hear rather than the difficult truths they need to hear.
  - c. This pressures those proclaiming the truth. There is the temptation to change the message to get listeners. There is hardship (4:5). The challenge can distract from evangelism and cause neglect of other duties.
2. Timothy was to take this charge to heart because Paul would soon be dying. Each new generation must step forward to do the work.

But Paul's life and death were an example of worshipful service. The drink offering (4:6) was an addition to other sacrifices or offerings, which a worshiper presented to God. Paul's offering to God was Gentile converts (Rom 15:16) to which his death was added like a drink offering.

Paul anticipated a crown of righteousness, a reward that recognized righteous living. (The crown was not salvation.) Paul therefore looked forward to Christ's appearing, anticipating honor and not shame.

What is happening now and what will happen in the future should concern you. Don't be one of those who only listens to the things that please you or be one of those who only says the things which people want to hear. Remember Christ and His return.

The attitude in today's culture will generally try to persuade you not to proclaim the Word. Opposition comes from the call to tolerate other beliefs, from the false idea that truth is relative, and from the rejection of any absolutes. Don't let it dissuade you. Proclamation presumes that there is a correct message which is absolutely and unchangeably true.

But you need to be certain of what you believe. Continue in what you have become convinced of, so that you can freely proclaim it to others. Study God's Word. Do it. Proclaim it. The lost need to hear the gospel to come to a right relationship with God. Believers need to hear the truth to grow spiritually and receive honor from God.