

## 2 Timothy 4:1-2 — What Is A Faithful Pastor? — Part 1

**May 9, 2021**

Take out your outlines. Open your Bibles to 2 Timothy 4. I don't care if you are using your phone as a Bible or a paper Bible. Either is fine, just find 2 Timothy 4. This is the last chapter of 2 Timothy. These are the last words the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy. When people speak their final words, they often share what is most important in their hearts. That is this chapter. It is an emotional crescendo as Paul spoke from his heart to the man that would take his place when he was gone. He told Timothy what the most important things were for him to know. He told Timothy what he must remember to be faithful to the end.

If you are new, let me give you some background. Paul wrote this final letter from the Mamertine prison in Rome. He would soon have his head chopped off. He knew he was in his final days. He knew the baton of leadership would pass from Paul to Timothy once-and-for-all.

In preparation for this day, Timothy spent years of his life traveling with Paul, studying with Paul, and learning from Paul. Timothy had become a walking, talking photocopy of the apostle Paul who would faithfully take the gospel message into the next generation. With the hour of Paul's departure at hand, Paul took this final chapter to tell Timothy what the most important things he had to remember when Paul was gone.

Let's read the first five verses of this chapter together.

**I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is 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, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. 2 Timothy 4:1–5 (ESV)

In these verses, we have an excellent portrait of what it looks like to be a faithful pastor. While this is a job description of faithful pastoring from Paul to Timothy, it is still relevant for us. Two weeks ago we learned that all Scripture is profitable for teaching, rebuking, and training us in righteousness. What it looked like to be a faithful pastor 2,000 years ago is still what it looks like to be a faithful pastor today. In these verses we have the job description of a faithful pastor, and it is just as relevant now as when it was written.

The primary audience of this message is me. It is the other pastors. These verses tell us what we are to do as pastors.

The secondary audience of this message is you. You need to know what the job of a pastor should look like. You need to hold your pastors accountable to their jobs to make sure they are faithful to Jesus.

Timothy would find this job description of a faithful pastor was something he would need in the future. Life was about to become incredibly difficult after Paul died.

Timothy was pastoring the church of Ephesus. When Paul founded the church, it was filled with passion, energy, and excitement. At this point, it was in spiritual decline. As we saw earlier in the book, many in the church were led astray by false teaching. Even some of the elders were led astray. Timothy soon found himself under enormous pressure to compromise the truth of the gospel.

He found himself under pressure to leave the life Paul taught him to live. The job description of a faithful pastor that we find in these verses is what kept him anchored in his turbulent future.

In addition, Paul's execution was the beginning of empire-wide persecution of Christians by the Romans. Soon Christians would be burned at the stake. They would be thrown into the gladiatorial arena. They would die brutal deaths for faith in Jesus. It was Timothy's job to pastor the church through those terrifying years. This job description kept Timothy faithful to his job as pastor, faithful to the end.

This job description kept Timothy anchored to faithful pastoring in turbulent times; this job description will keep pastor today faithful in difficult times.

While we read five verses, we will only deal with the first two verses this morning. We will come back to the rest of the verses in the next two weeks.

### **A faithful pastor must understand the seriousness of his job.**

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom... 2 Timothy 4:1 (ESV)

This verse is talking about the seriousness of pastoral ministry. The word *charge*, or some translations say *solemnly charge*, is a very strong word.

Charge (so solemnly charge) — It means to seriously instruct someone on important matters, especially in a legal context.

This is what your lawyer does for you before you get on the witness stand. You better listen and you better listen closely.

Paul wanted Timothy to closely listen to what he had to say about the seriousness of the pastoral ministry. Why is pastoring a serious job? The seriousness of his job is directly related to the one to whom the pastor must

answer. Anyone called to communicate the Word of God must take his job seriously because he is directly accountable to God.

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. James 3:1 (ESV)

Before we get into the details of 2 Timothy 4:1 and James 3:1, I simply want us to notice the topic under which both of these verses fall. Both of these verses are talking about the second coming of Jesus. Timothy, take your job as a pastor seriously because Jesus is coming back. When Jesus comes, there will be an accounting of your work.

Every preacher is not directly responsible to a church board, a congregation, a denomination. Every preacher is directly responsible to Jesus. Every pastor will be strictly judged by Jesus when it comes to his pastoring. He will directly answer to Jesus for his pastoring and teaching. The reason James tells us pastors will be judged with greater strictness is because pastoring carries the potential to lead many astray. It carries the possibility of destroying many lives.

Years ago, when I was first ordained in the Free Church, I was told to create my own ordination service. I was to ask someone I respected to come and deliver the ordination sermon. Ordination sermons are different from other messages. The visiting pastor would preach the ordination sermon directly to me. The rest of the congregation simply gets to listen in on my personalized message.

If you have been around CrossWinds a while, you know I asked one of my preaching heroes to deliver the message. His name is Haddon Robinson. He

traveled to the small rural church I pastored in Michigan to deliver the sermon. I still remember the main point of the message. It was the one thing he wanted me to remember. Kurt, you have an audience of one. One day you will stand before Jesus and be judged by Jesus for how you pastor. It doesn't matter what a board thinks about you. It doesn't matter what a church thinks about you. Ultimately, all that matters is what Jesus thinks about you. Live as a pastor that has an audience of one. Don't be discouraged by people's opinions. Don't bend the truth under pressure. Think of the day you will stand in front of Jesus. You will give an answer to him. Obviously, that challenge stuck with me and I remember it with great clarity. That is the way every pastor should think of his pastoring.

Now let's look at the specifics of Paul's charge to Timothy.

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead...

**Jesus will be the judge.**

God has ordained Jesus as the one who will be the judge and before whom Timothy would give an account of his pastoring.

For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son... John 5:22 (ESV)

The terminology Paul used is interesting. It is legal terminology. It is the same terminology used in the ancient world to write up a subpoena calling people to appear in court. Archaeologists have unearthed subpoenas from the ancient world. One reads like this.

"The case will be drawn up against you in the court of Hieropolis in the presence of (judge's name)."

This is very similar terminology.

Paul was telling Timothy, and by extension telling all pastors, that when Christ returns, pastors will be served a subpoena to appear in Jesus' court where he will be the judge of their work.

Today, when people go to court, there are lawyers involved. There are witnesses involved. There is cross-examination. All of this is to determine the truth so the judge or the jury can render a decision about the truth.

When pastors are brought before judge Jesus, things will be different. There will be no lawyers. There will be no witnesses. There will be no cross examination. There will be no excuses. There will be no extra information needed. Jesus, who is God, will know everything; he knows to judge pastors perfectly, accurately, and fairly.

How do we know that? Paul just told Timothy that he was charging Timothy in the presence of God. Timothy's pastoring was taking place in God's presence. God was watching Timothy's ministry. God knew every challenging circumstance Timothy would face. God knew every decision Timothy would make. God knew every rationalization Timothy had in his thought processes. Jesus is the all knowing judge. This is why we know Jesus will be a just judge.

By the way, it is not just Timothy and pastors who will one day have their lives judged by Jesus. All of us will one day stand before Jesus and be judged by Jesus for how we lived. We will be judged for the choices we make. It will be perfect judgement because there is nothing Jesus does not know. There will be no way we can say, "Jesus, you are missing part of the picture." Jesus will have

all the facts. He even knows our motives and our thoughts. Jesus knows what drives us even better than we understand ourselves.

When I was reading Hebrews 4 for our Take Up and Read Bible reading plan during the week, I ran across a verse that talks about this very topic.

**And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Hebrews 4:13 (ESV)**

This is very compelling. All of us must remember that our lives will be judged by Jesus. Jesus knows all there is to know about us. We cannot hide anything from him.

One thing we have to remember about this judgement is we are not responsible for the hurtful things done to us or said about us. We are held responsible for how we respond to them, not that they were done to us. This is very important to remember.

When you are driving in traffic and somebody cuts you off and you almost get in an accident, you will not need to answer about what was done to you. You will need to answer about how many fingers you held up when you waved at the motorist that almost ran you into the ditch.

You will not be judged by Jesus about all the hurtful things your family does to you. You will be judged by Jesus for how you responded to them after they hurt you.

**This is a judgement of evaluation, not damnation.**

The word judge is an important word. It is the Greek word *krino*. It does not refer to a judgment of damnation but it refers to a judgment of evaluation.

*Krino* is the Greek word where we get our English word criteria, or critic. It is an evaluation judgement that is talked about.

Paul said to Timothy that he had to remember that when Jesus evaluated Timothy and other pastors, it would be a fair evaluation because Jesus has all the information. Jesus knows all the details. The good news is the evaluation would be to determine Timothy's reward for serving Jesus. There is now no condemnation for Christians it says in Romans 8, Jesus has paid for our sin, so Timothy's evaluation would determine his reward in heaven and his reward would determine his level of service in heaven. A pastor that serves Jesus well on this earth will be rewarded with an increased capacity to serve Jesus in the new heavens and earth.

Another way to look at this is from 1 Corinthians 3. In that passage Paul talked about Jesus being the foundation that all pastors build upon. What matters is how they build upon the foundation of Jesus. Jesus will evaluate what a pastor built upon the foundation of Jesus into the lives of his people at the judgment.

...For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire. 1 Corinthians 3:10–15 (ESV)

So Timothy will have his pastoring evaluated by Jesus. All of us will have our lives evaluated by Jesus. All of us will be rewarded by Jesus according to what we have built upon the foundation of Jesus. This is incredible motivation to be faithful in our pastoring, living, and teaching.



Paul lived his life very aware of this coming judgment and he desperately wanted to make sure he pleased Jesus.

Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God. 1 Corinthians 4:2–5 (ESV)

Corinth had some great communicators, some great pastors. People were ranking them according to their work and their speaking. "He is the best. He is number one. This guy is number two. In the other corner we have men that are not good speakers at all. They don't even get noticed." Paul said, "You better be careful. You do not know these people's hearts. You do not know their motives. Even when you don't know anything against them, God may know something against them. God's evaluation of their pastoring and their preaching may be different than yours. Before you pass out awards, wait until God evaluates them. His judgement will be fair. He knows the truth."

### **Jesus is the judge of the living and the dead.**

Paul also said Jesus is the judge of the living and the dead. What does that mean? It think it means exactly what it says. It doesn't matter if you are living when Jesus returns or if you have been dead for 500 years when Christ returns, Jesus will evaluate you.

To bring clarity to this, we need to remember that in the Bible, there are two very clear judgements. Some see more than two judgements. Others

collapse these two judgements into one. I think there are two different judgements.

First, there is what is known as the judgment seat of Christ. This is a judgment for Christians. It is not a judgment of damnation. It is a judgment of rewards based on how we lived. This will happen when Jesus returns. It is the judgement Paul was talking about to Timothy.

There is another judgement at the very end of history called the great white throne judgment. At that time, it is not just Christians who are raised from the dead and given eternal bodies and judged by Jesus, but everyone else is raised from the dead, given indestructible bodies then judged by Jesus. That is a judgement of damnation. It is a judgement to determine a just punishment for all who died apart from Christ and who refused Christ. Jesus determines their just condemnation in the lake of fire.

While Christians will get resurrection bodies that will last forever at the judgement seat of Christ, everyone else who has ever lived will get resurrection bodies at the great white throne judgement. Indestructible resurrection bodies are a great thing when you are living in the new creation and serving Jesus who is known as the fountainhead of all joy in the universe. Indestructible resurrection bodies are a terrible thing when you are living in the lake of fire in torment for the rest of eternity with the devil and his angels.

Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead

who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. Revelation 20:11–15 (ESV)

So Christ will judge the dead and the living. If our name is in the book of life, it will be a judgement of rewards at the judgement seat of Christ. If someone's name is not in the book of life, it will be a judgment of damnation at the great white throne judgement.

When would Timothy's judgment take place? Paul told us.

...and by his appearing and his kingdom.

Timothy will be judged by Jesus and rewarded by Jesus when Jesus returns and sets up his kingdom.

The word appearing is significant. It has great background to it. It is the Greek word *epiphany*. This word was often used in connection with the Roman emperor. When the Roman emperor came to a town, it was said he was making his epiphany. An emperor typically sent runners ahead to let people know he was coming so they could prepare the way. When people knew the Roman emperor was coming to their town, they worked hard to clean things up. They got rid of the trash. They swept the streets. They cleaned the buildings. People wore their best clothes. People looked their best because the emperor was coming to their town. They wanted to please him.

This is what Paul was saying to Timothy. "Just as people live their best when an emperor is coming to town, you do your best because you know Jesus is coming. Live in such a way that he is pleased with your life and your pastoring."

A simple summary of this first verse is that Timothy had to understand, all pastors must understand, the seriousness of the task of a pastor. We are being closely observed by Jesus. We will be judged by Jesus. We will be rewarded by Jesus. As James reminds us, pastors and teachers will be judged with greater strictness.

Pastors must remember that it ultimately doesn't matter what a church thinks about them or what a board thinks about them. What matters is what Jesus thinks about them. He knows the truth. We ultimately have an audience of one.

**The faithful preacher must understand the content of his message.**

...preach the word... 2 Timothy 4:2 (ESV)

The pastor is to preach the word! That is the essence of a pastor's job. Preaching is what a pastor is to do. Preaching the Word of God is the content of what he is to preach.

**A pastor's core job is preaching.**

Let's talk about preaching for a moment.

Preaching is the Greek word *kerusso*. It means to herald. It means to proclaim something publicly. In the culture of the ancient world, they didn't have Twitter and Facebook. When the emperor wanted to give a message he sent his messengers out to the towns and they would publicly proclaim the emperor's news to the people. Paul said Jesus commissioned him to be a public preacher, a proclaimer of the good news of Jesus to the community. This is why Paul traveled from town to town telling people about Jesus.

Paul told Timothy his job was to do the same thing. Preaching is the core of every preacher's job. They are to publicly proclaim the gospel message. For Timothy, this was not an easy thing. He was young, and as we learned earlier in this book, he was somewhat timid in nature, especially when compared to Paul, who was so outspoken. Timothy also had plenty of opposition to his preaching about Jesus. As we learned earlier in this book, there were plenty of false teachers and spiritual scam artists in Ephesus who were eager to twist Timothy's public words, misquote him and publicly abuse him. When Timothy publicly proclaimed the good news of Jesus, he expected to get in trouble with the Jews, who were antagonistic to the gospel. Timothy was very familiar with how dangerous Jewish opposition to the public proclamation of the gospel could become. As we saw in the book of Acts, the Jews pursued Paul from town as he spoke about Jesus. Eventually, they stoned Paul and left him for dead because he preached the good news of Jesus. That kind of opposition to the gospel message was not out of the question in Timothy's future. As I mentioned earlier, this was a time of growing hostility from Rome. Paul, who was currently imprisoned for the gospel, would soon be executed. Empire-wide persecution of Christians was ramping up, so public proclamation of the gospel message carried a lot of risks, yet it was the core of Timothy's job. He needed to remember he was not called to be silent and hide in the shadows.

**A pastor's job is to preach the Word.**

What was Timothy to preach? The Word.

What is the Word? As we learned two week ago, all Scripture is inspired by God. By all Scripture Paul was not just referring to the Old Testament but also to the New Testament, even as it was being written. If you want to learn more about that, I refer you to the message from two weeks ago.

That means the core of a pastor's job is the public proclamation of the Bible, both the Old and New Testament, as he publicly proclaims the good news about Jesus. Look how the book of Romans summarizes the important of public preaching for the spread of the gospel and the growth of the church.

For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? Romans 10:13–14 (ESV)

Paul didn't use sophisticated rhetoric to wow people and capture their hearts or manipulate their emotions. He just preached the Word of God. He preached Jesus. The task of the preacher is still to preach the Word. There are men who are gifted public speakers. There are men who can move an audience by the power of their speech. There are men who are wise, knowledgable and well-trained. There are men who can tell great stories. There are men who can use logic and reason. No matter how gifted of an orator a man is, he is not a faithful preacher if he does not preach the Word of God. That is the core of a preacher's calling. This is why the vast majority of our preaching at CrossWinds is expository preaching. Week after week, verse after verse, the goal of our teaching is to let the text do the talking. Here is a simple definition of expository preaching.

Expository preaching is the presentation of the Word of God to people in an intelligible and forcible manner that accurately conveys the meaning of the sacred writer.

Let me tell you a few reasons we preach the way we do at CrossWinds and why we typically work straight through books of the Bible in an expository manner as we teach, illustrate, explain and apply the Word of God.

### Why is consecutive expository preaching the regular practice of CrossWinds?

1. **It lets God speak to us rather than hearing a man speak to us.** When we preach the Word of God, we are preaching God's word, not man's word. Many things you find on the Internet are entertaining, informative, and helpful, but they are not the Word of God. The Bible says we are born again by the word of truth. We need to hear God's Word, not man's word to be born again. The Bible also says man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. We need to hear God's words to mature in Christ. Man's words do not mature us in Christ. All week long we hear the words of men. On YouTube we hear the words of commentators discussing the problems of the world. On Sunday we do not need to hear another man's voice. We need to hear God's voice so people can be saved by Jesus and strengthened by Jesus.
2. **It forces the preacher to proclaim all of God's words.** The last point described why we teach expositively. We want to unleash the Bible to let God speak. This point pertains to why we typically preach straight through books of the Bible. Preaching through books of the Bible instead of skipping around to our favorite verses forces us to address issues we would otherwise

avoid. If you are preaching consecutively and expositoryly, you just take the text as it comes. You have to preach it. It forces us into topics I would avoid. It has forced us to talk about church structure, creation versus evolution, the role of women in marriage and the church, and marital sexuality. We have been forced to wrestle with a host of controversial issues simply because the next verse in the book of the Bible we were studying talked about the topic. That is good.

3. **It promotes biblical literacy.** I would rather preach the Bible because I would rather study the Bible and I would rather teach you the Bible. That way you will know your Bible better. If I just gave you stories, such as a story about a cat, dog, and a boy, you would leave thinking about the story of the cat, dog, and the boy. When we teach the Bible, you leave thinking about the Bible. The Bible is the best thing to have in your head when you hit the parking lot. I am not saying that stories and illustrations are wrong. They are good. Jesus used stories. They are a great teaching tool. What I am saying is teaching stories instead of the Bible does not promote knowing your Bible, which is the most important thing we need in our hearts and heads if we are going to please Jesus.
4. **It enables a message that carries authority.** There is some authority in a preacher's reasoning. There is some authority in a preacher's logic. When a pastor raises his voice and is filled with emotion, he is trying to gain authority with his audience. Human contrived means of authority, even when combined together, do not begin to approach the authority inherent in the Word of God.



The greatest authority of all are simply the words, “Thus saith the Lord.” They are the words, “The Bible says...” That is what gives a message authority.

That is why we preach from this book.

### **A faithful preacher must understand the scope of his mission.**

The rest of this verse expands on the dimensions of the responsibility a preacher has to preach the word.

### **The preacher must always be eager to preach.**

...preach the word; be ready in season and out of season... 2 Timothy 4:2 (ESV)

**It continues by saying “be ready.”** Let me draw your attention to that word. The faithful preacher must be ready. Some translations have “be urgent.” This word has a sense of eagerness. The idea is the preacher must be ready to preach at all times. There are no holidays for a preacher. There are no real vacations for a preacher. There are no such things as off hours for a preacher. A preacher is to be driven. He is to be compelled. He is to always be on duty. He is always ready to go. The idea is to have a mindset that seizes every opportunity to proclaim the good news of Jesus and the Word of God. A good preacher is eager to preach, not reticent to preach. A pastor is not to see his job vocationally as much as they do passionately. There is not reluctance in his heart to speak about Jesus but readiness.

One of the questions that I always felt was foolish on pastoral job interviews was, “If you could do anything in this world you wanted, what would it be?” I think that is the dumbest question. If I wanted to do something else, I would be doing something else. A pastor is not a pastor because he couldn’t find another job. The only reason a person should be a pastor is because God placed

in his heart a burning desire to preach and teach the Word of God to the people of God. If he can comfortably do something else, he should do something else.

Let me be honest, sometimes pastoring and preaching is not easy. It is tiring spending eight hours every Saturday in the office studying for a sermon. It is tiring spending long hours in front of a computer reading, thinking, and studying. It is exhausting. Where does a pastor find the energy for this work? The Holy Spirit is the one who provides the strength and the energy. The Holy Spirit provides eagerness and readiness. The only way a pastor can stay fired up for preaching the Word of God is if he has been called by God to the task and is energized by the Holy Spirit for the task.

**The preacher must always be ready to preach.**

...preach the word; be ready in season and out of season...2 Timothy 4:2 (ESV)

In season and out of season --- what does that mean? It means be ready when it is convenient and when it is not, when it seems to fit and when it does not. A preacher needs to be ready to go at all times. Sometimes when I fly and I am returning on a red-eye flight after a long week, I am tired. As God would have it, I find myself sitting next to a person I have never seen and will probably never see again. I find myself wanting to put my AirPods in my ears and be alone. When I do that, I find the Holy Spirit poking me with the thought that sleep is not my job. Maybe the reason God sat me next to someone is because this person has not heard about Jesus. God placed me there to tell him or her about Jesus. Instead of being a hermit, I need to be friendly and strike up a conversation and prayerfully see if God provides an open door.

By the way, it is not just the pastor's job to be ready to share about Jesus in season and out of season, when it is convenient and when it is not convenient. It is the job of every one of us. The only way we will reach people with Jesus is if we are always eager and looking for ways to tell people about Jesus.

Now Paul turned from the scope of preaching to the tone of the preacher.

**The preacher must have negative and positive sides to his message.**

First, he dealt with the negative side of a preacher's message, then the positive side. The negative side has two words for it. A preacher is to reprove and rebuke. What do these words mean?

Reproof deals with the mind. Rebuke deals with the heart. Reproof means understanding something is wrong. Rebuke deals with the conviction that you are guilty of that wrong.

To reprove someone means to straighten out his or her thinking with regard to what the Bible says about sin. Reproving is to show people the sinfulness of sin. Rebuking is to show people they are sinners and guilty of that sin. First, you disclose the sinfulness of sin, then you disclose the sinfulness of a person because he or she is guilty of that sin. That is the two-fold negative element of preaching.

If you have been around me for counseling, you know this is the framework I adopt. Let's take the example of premarital sex. If I am counseling a couple involved in premarital sex I simply write down verses from the Bible showing what the Bible say about sexual purity. I then have the people I am counseling read those verses. Then I ask them how they are doing with those

verses. I want them to see what the Bible says about sin then examine their lives for that sin.

This is never comfortable. This is never fun. Often people do not like you in this process, but it is part of the job description of a good pastor. It is only when people see the bad news of their sin in the eyes of God that they will run to the good news of Jesus.

Pastoring is not all about delivering bad news. It is also about delivering good news. It includes exhorting. That is a Greek word that means encouragement to change. So the preacher is to identify sin from God's Word, then he is to encourage people change and run from sin. After a pastor confronts sin, he is to come alongside people and encourage them out of sin through Jesus. We see Paul doing this in his letter to the Thessalonians.

For you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory. 1 Thessalonians 2:11–12 (ESV)

There are two more positives that go with this.

A preacher is to have complete patience with people. The Greek word used in this text specifically means patience with people. This text is not referring to patience with circumstances. As the pastor is identifying sin and encouraging people to Jesus and away from sin, he needs to be incredibly patient in the process. As you know, people are often very slow to change. A pastor cannot get angry at people who don't change. He cannot get short with people who don't change. He needs to continue to be patient with people who are struggling with change.

How can a pastor stay patient in this difficult time when people don't change? I think the only way to stay patient with people is to remember how patient Jesus was with us when we were stubborn and refused to change.

The last word is teaching. This brings us back to the beginning. All change in people is accomplished through the Word of God. A good pastor identifies sin from the Bible. He encourages repentance. He continues in patience when that repentance doesn't come. He continues teaching, illustrating, explaining, and applying the Word of God.

Have you ever had a pair of pliers you left outside in the rain that are now covered in rust. They are useless. If you soak the pliers in vinegar the rust will go away, and they will become useful once again. That is the same way the continual teaching of the Word of God affects the rust of sin on the soul. God uses his Word to create and sustain spiritual life in people who are far from him. This is why it is always a pastor's responsibility to teach the Word.

## **Conclusion**

So, the core of a preacher's job is to preach the Word. It is the Word of God used by the Holy Spirit of God which creates and sustains spiritual life. How is a pastor to preach the Word? He is to be ready to preach at all times. He is to be eager to preach at all times, in all circumstances in every location. The content of his preaching needs to identify sin from the Word of God and in the life of the sinner. His preaching should encourage repentance and be patient with those who are struggling.

A preacher must also remember that pastoring and preaching is not a part-time casual job. It is a serious job because of the nature of the task at hand.

A preacher will give an account to Jesus for his work. He will be strictly judged by Jesus for his preaching and his living.

Having said all that, while all of us are not called to preach to the extent of a preacher, all of us are called to be ready in season and out of season to reach people with Jesus. All of us are responsible to preach the Word at our level of influence in our sphere of the world. All of us are responsible to show those we love sin from the Scriptures and to encourage them to repent.

All of us will be judged by Jesus and rewarded by Jesus for how we live.

This week, let's reach more people with Jesus.



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