

**THE GOOD FIGHT - PART 5:**  
**“PAUL’S FINAL CHARGE”**  
**2 TIMOTHY 4:1-22**

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**Personal Introduction**

Good afternoon everyone. I'm Jeff - one of the pastors at HMCC of Jakarta. And it's my privilege to preach the Word of God for us today!

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**Sermon Series Introduction**

We'll be concluding our sermon series called "The Good Fight" - where we're going through the letter of 2 Timothy together.

The title of today's sermon is "Paul's Final Charge" (or command).

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**Introduction**

Now if you knew that you don't have much time left to live, what would be your final words to your loved ones?

You may say, "I love you." You may say, "Thank you." You may also share some wisdom and guidance, so that your loved ones will be better prepared for the future.

I think most of us would choose the things of utmost importance - Something that will be helpful to them, not only for the next week, but for the rest of their lives, even into eternity...

<pause>

2 Timothy is known to be Apostle Paul's final letter, containing his last recorded words.

He wrote it while he was imprisoned in Rome and about to be executed.

And this letter is written to his dear friend Timothy, who's a pastor at the church in Ephesus and who's like a son to him.

So what rose to the top of Paul's heart when he knew that his life was about to end?

This final chapter contains Paul's final charge (or command) to Timothy. And it's something that Paul thinks is very important. And so it should be important for us as well.

His final recorded words emphasize two things: The preaching of God's Word and the people of God.

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### **The One Thing**

We should orient our lives around the preaching of God's Word and the people of God.

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### **Scripture Introduction**

Please turn your Bibles to 2 Timothy 4:1-22 (If you don't have a Bible you can download the ESV Bible App).

For context - Throughout this final letter, Paul's message to Timothy has been Word-centered:

- He's been telling Timothy to not be ashamed of God's Word but to guard it.
- He's not to keep God's Word to himself but to teach other faithful men who will be able to teach others also.
- He's to rightly handle God's Word, especially in light of false teachers who are handling God's Word wrongly.

In the previous passage, Paul reminded Timothy that all Scripture is breathed out by God and is the very words of God Himself. Now if that's true, then what should Timothy do with God's Word?

This is where we're at in today's passage... This is the final thrust of Paul's Word-centered message...

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### **2 Timothy 4:1-22 (ESV)**

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 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. 3 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, 4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. 5 But as for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

9 Do your best to come to me soon. 10 For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. 11 Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry. 12 Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. 13 When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments. 14 Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. 15 Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our message. 16 At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! 17 But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. 18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

19 Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. 20 Erastus remained at Corinth, and I left Trophimus, who was ill, at Miletus. 21 Do your best to come before winter. Eubulus sends greetings to you, as do Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brothers.

22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

This is God's Word.

If you look at the very last word in verse 22 - the "you" that you see there is plural in the original language. So it reads more like, "Grace be with you all."

This is important because this means that Paul's expectation was for this letter to not only be read by Timothy but by the members of his church as well. So note that what we just read is not only applicable for Timothy or pastors, but for all of us.

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We'll take a look at this passage in 2 parts...

### **Overview**

We should orient our lives around:

- I. The preaching of God's Word (vv. 1-8)
- II. The people of God (vv. 9-22)

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### **I. The preaching of God's Word (vv. 1-8)**

Look at verse 1 - Imagine Timothy reading this final letter from his dear friend. Paul says, "I charge you..."

- Do you feel the weight there? He's not just saying, "Hey Timothy, please consider this..." or "please think about this..." but he's saying "I charge you... I command you..."

- And Paul doesn't tell Timothy what this charge is right away. First, he tells him that this charge is being given in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus (the weight gets heavier) - he basically means: Timothy, God is my witness! Just as God will be the one to judge the living and the dead, He'll also be the one to judge you regarding this command I'm about to give...
  - That's how weighty and important this is...
- What's the charge?

Look at verse 2 - "Preach the Word."

Now, I know some of us may be thinking, "Huh? That's it? Out of all the things that Paul could've said (with his decades of experience in church planting)... that's it? Just preach the Word?"

But there's something rich here about this command. Let's take a closer look...

- Notice that Paul is emphasizing the content that Timothy should be preaching.
  - He's not to preach on his own thoughts or ideas or opinions, but he's to preach the Word.
    - Which means that the content of his sermons have already been decided - he's to preach from Scripture because all Scripture has been breathed out by God and is the very words of God Himself.
- And Paul is also emphasizing the means in which Timothy is to communicate God's Word - It's by preaching it.
  - It would look something like this [one person standing in front of a congregation and proclaiming God's Word].

To be honest, it doesn't look very spectacular... But if we stop and think about what's actually happening here... it's actually quite amazing. Because when a pastor preaches the Word, you may be hearing the pastor's voice (just as you're hearing my voice right now), but the content of what you're hearing is not merely my message but God's message.

Consider Luke 10:16 - When Jesus sent his seventy-two disciples, he tells them that "The one who hears you hears me, the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me."

- What's the implication? Their message equals God's message.

To be clear:

The power and authority in preaching is not because of the power and authority of the preacher, but that of God's Word. Think about the power and authority of God's spoken Word...

- God spoke and said, "Let there be light," and there was light.
- Jesus spoke and said, "Quiet! Be still!" And the storm calmed down.
- Jesus said, "Lazarus, come out!" And Lazarus came out from his tomb.
- And on the cross, Jesus said, "It is finished!" And it truly was.

And now, the same God - by His sovereignty - chose to speak through ordinary people (like Timothy and pastors).

In that sense, pastors are like your siblings who tell you, "Hey, let's clean our rooms." When you tell your sibling that, usually the reply is, "Who are you? I don't answer to you."

"Well, actually the one who told me to say that was Dad. Dad says, 'clean your room.'" That hits different. Your sibling may rush to clean his room - "Why didn't you say so!"

So, brothers and sisters, it's not just me or Paul saying this - Dad says, "preach the Word."

So what does that mean for us?

- This means that pastors are to be careful in our preaching. Because unlike God's Word that's without errors, preachers can make errors.
- That's why in this church, our pastors are doing our best to commit to expositional preaching.
  - In an expositional sermon, the message of the sermon is determined by the message in God's Word.
  - We're not preaching about our own agenda.
    - The goal is to help the congregation understand God's Word better. That's what God says we need.
  - Preaching expositionally is basically just another way of saying "preaching the Word."
- Church, one application point for you - as you're listening to a sermon... Ask yourselves, "What does the text mean?"
  - Have the Bible open in front of you as you listen.
  - And see for yourselves if the preacher's message is consistent with what you see in the text.
  - Which means you'll have to listen attentively - And one thing that can help is if you re-orient how you view sermons - think about this not as Jeff's message, but as God's message.
    - I think that'll be so helpful.
    - This is the message that God says will be helpful for His people.
- And for us, as a church, what this means is that we should learn to value expositional preaching.
  - So one application for us is to commit to place ourselves under the preaching of God's Word each week; prioritize gathering together as a church on Sundays (make it your non-negotiable).
    - This doesn't mean that you won't miss some Sundays, but regularly, we're to gather together with God's people.

- And this also means that if you happen to move to another city or move to another church, then you should look for a church that preaches expositionally (I can't stress this enough).
- You may have certain preferences regarding church, but what God's Word is teaching us here is that the expositional preaching of God's Word is of the utmost importance.
  - There's a reason why this is the one thing that Paul is emphasizing in his final words.
  - Everything else can fail but the preaching of God's Word cannot fail.

Let's go back to verse 2 - Paul then gives the context of when Timothy should be preaching the Word - It's both in season and out of season, which basically means all the time!

- Both in season when it's easy and people are hungry for the Word, but also out of season when it's hard and people are not as hungry for the Word.
- But even then... even when people don't want to hear the preaching of God's Word, Timothy is still to be patient and continue to preach the Word.

Look at verses 3-5 - Paul is going to caution Timothy here.

- His warning is that most of the time, his listeners will be out of season. Most of the time, people don't want to hear God's Word.
- They'll tend to want to hear something else - they'd want to hear messages that would scratch their itching ears, meaning they don't want to be rebuked and listen to a message that makes them more itchy, people would rather listen to a speaker who can always affirm their personal desires.
- And what's going to end up happening is that they'll start straying from the truth and start believing in myths instead.
  - When you think of a myth - it's something that's widely believed by a lot of people, but is actually *false*.
  - I'll give us a couple of examples here: "Always follow your heart" or "You know it's the right thing to do when you feel at peace about it."
    - That sounds good and true but they're false beliefs - because to be honest what our hearts desire is not always good. God's Word teaches that our hearts are deceitful and wicked - sometimes what we desire is selfish and very hurtful to others, and that's not right.
    - And if our hearts are sinful then we'll probably feel more at peace with sin than we think, it just so happens that we've become very good at justifying our actions.
    - All that to say, we're all actually prone to want to scratch our itching ears and listen to other messages that are not of God's Word but simply make us feel better about ourselves.

So brothers and sisters, be careful of who you listen to...

- Be careful of speakers who are not really preachers but more like motivational speakers. They tend to be very charismatic and eloquent and maybe even entertaining. They may start by quoting Scripture, but instead of proclaiming what the text says they merely use it as a springboard to start proclaiming their own motivational speech.
- It may sound good, it may make us feel good, and it may even be helpful, but just be aware that that's not preaching the Word.

Now look at verse 5 - "As for you Timothy..." (there's a contrast here). As for you Timothy, don't be like that.

- There's also going to be temptation for you to want to scratch their ears and preach a message that they want to hear just so you'll be liked.
- Don't do that; continue to endure even in suffering to fulfill your ministry.

One great example of what this looks like is Charles Simeon, who's a faithful preacher from the 18th century. (If you're in our Simeon Trust Cohort - Simeon Trust is named after him and I think you'll see why). This is what one author wrote about him:

- "Charles Simeon, a Reformed Anglican preacher in the late eighteenth century, faced severe opposition from his people in Cambridge, England. His students at Cambridge would regularly interrupt his worship services and even throw stones through the windows of the church. Their frustration was due to his pointed, warm-hearted, evangelical preaching. Along with students, many of his congregants made it clear that he was an unwanted pastor. The pew-holders of his church locked the pews so that people were forced to stand in the aisles during worship services. They did this, not for one week, but for more than ten years! After a week of such treatment, most of us would be putting out our resumes in search of a new place of ministry. But what is astounding about Simeon is that he stayed for fifty-four years! He devoted his life to this hostile congregation, sacrificially loving them and zealously proclaiming the whole counsel of God to them."

That's what it looks like to endure suffering and to preach out of season.

Look at verses 6-7 - Paul is saying that his time as a preacher (and as a Christian) is coming to an end. His life is like a drink offering that's almost completely poured.

- He said, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."
- Throughout his letters, Paul had often referred to the Christian life as a battle or like a race that we're to run till the end. And now, the end of his fight/race has come. He has held on to his faith till the end.
  - And it hasn't been easy - He's been threatened and persecuted, people have stoned him and left him for dead; he's been in prison multiple times.
  - He went through a lot to preach the Word to others. But now, his fight is almost over.
- In contrast, Timothy's fight (or race) is still ongoing. He's to continue to preach the Word.

- And look at chapter 2, verse 2 - Paul has the next generation in mind. Timothy is to preach and teach the Word to other faithful men who will be able to teach others also; he's to raise up the next generation of pastors who would continue to faithfully preach and teach God's Word to God's people.
- The picture of this race looks more like a relay race.
  - As one person's race ends, another's race begins.
  - The baton that's being passed is the Word of God.
- On this side of history, Timothy's race has also ended, and so has the races of many faithful Christians who we may know. But ours is still ongoing. Our task is to preach the Word so that it is passed down to the next generation. One day, our race will also come to an end, but the Word is not meant to die with us.
  - And I say "us" here because even though, yes, preaching is primarily for pastors, but God's Word (in Colossians 3:16) commands that ALL Christians should be teaching God's Word to one another.
    - For those who are non-pastors, you may not be preaching from the pulpit, but you can teach God's Word to one another, including:
      - To other brothers and sisters in this church
      - To your children
      - And maybe even to other members' children in Building Blocks

Let's remember how other saints before us have done their part to pass us the baton (so to speak), and now it's our turn.

- May we be faithful in doing this until our race is complete.

Now, let's look at verse 8 - Paul makes it clear that he's not preaching the Word so that he'll be admired by people or so that he'll gain wealth and fame.

- The reward that he has in mind is not earthly but heavenly.
- And notice what Paul says about this Heavenly reward - It's not only for him but for all those who love Jesus and his appearing, meaning: it's for all Christians who look forward to our Lord's second coming.
- In the same way, our motivation in preaching the Word should not be because we're guaranteed to see fruit and success in this life.
  - But it's about fixing our eyes on eternity and looking forward to the fruit that we may not see till the life to come.
- We preach the Word & place ourselves under the preaching of the Word... not to please man but to please God.
  - So that when our race is complete, we hear our Lord, saying, "well done, good and faithful servant."

So we should orient our lives around - First, the preaching of God's Word. And second...



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## **II. The people of God (vv. 9-22)**

Paul now transitions from his final charge (to Timothy) to his final instructions and greetings... And please keep your Bible open because we'll be going back and forth between verses in this section.

Look at verses 9-12, we see that a good number of Paul's dear friends are actually not with him during this time.

- Some are away because they're on ministry assignments. But there are others who have abandoned and left him - Like Demas who has gone to Thessalonica because he is in love with this present world (he doesn't want to endure suffering with Paul; he prefers to have earthly pleasures right now). The tragic thing about Demas is that he was one of the ones who sent his greetings at the end of Paul's letter to the Colossians. And now his name is listed here as someone who's left the faith.
- So understandably, Paul feels abandoned & alone at this time.
  - And so in verse 9 - he instructs Timothy to do his best to come to him soon. And in verse 11 - he tells him to bring Mark also (Paul is in need of fellowship and encouragement).
- And look at verse 21 - It's almost winter. So in verse 13 - He asks Timothy to help bring him his cloak. And while he's at it, please also bring his books and parchments (which would most likely include Scripture).

Here we see another side of Paul.

- So don't mistake the preaching with the preacher or we won't understand Paul.
- Paul was bold and like a lion in his preaching because he knows that he's standing on the power and authority of God's Word.
- But Paul the person is like everyone else - Even Paul is not beyond practical help; he needs other people. And even Paul can feel lonely and abandoned sometimes.
  - (Maybe that's what some of us are feeling right now).

But notice how Paul doesn't choose to isolate himself at this moment; he leans on his friends for help. More specifically, he relies on the people of God. These are the people that God has placed in his life.

Let's look at verses 10-13 & 19-21 - I think this will give us a better picture of what it looks like to have Gospel friendships:

- First, if we orient our lives on the people of God, then there will be some brothers and sisters who we're especially close with and walking alongside us...
  - For Paul, it's Timothy and then there's also Luke who's walking alongside him and with him at this time (And yes, this is Luke - the author of Luke and Acts).

- And if we orient our lives on the people of God, then there will be some brothers and sisters who we're sad to see leave...
  - Like Crescens, Titus, Tychicus (who were Paul's ministry partners who are away on ministry assignments).
  - Hopefully one day, we can also send out some brothers and sisters to plant a church, and that will be bittersweet as well.
  - Or it's also bittersweet when we have members transfer out of our church to other churches...
  
- But if we orient our lives on the people of God, then we can also have Gospel friends from other churches (we're not tribal and care only about our local church).
  - In verses 19-20 - we see Paul sending his greetings to Aquila and his wife Prisca (or Priscilla) - His ministry partners.
    - They're most likely at the church in Ephesus during this time because Paul is writing to Timothy in Ephesus.
  - And there's also Onesiphorus - who Paul already mentioned back in chapter 1 - He's the brother who was not ashamed of Paul's chains and so came to Rome and looked for Paul in prison, so he could minister to him.
  - And Paul also had Erastus at Corinth; Trophimus at Miletus (These are some more ministry friends).
  - And then Paul is sending greetings from Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, and Claudia (these names are not mentioned anywhere else). Most likely they're members of the Roman church, who's sending their greetings to Timothy.

But isn't this a beautiful picture? We see that Paul was not alone in his ministry (and Timothy is not alone either); God provided them with a lot of Gospel friends who can support one another.

How about us, do we also have brothers and sisters who we're walking alongside with?

- And so this is something we should reflect on - Have we been orienting our lives around the gathering of God's people? Have we been investing in Gospel friendship?
- When we're going through a difficult time, do we tend to isolate ourselves or do we continue to gather and lean on our spiritual family for help?

There's a reason why God has designed His people to gather together as a church.

And look at verses 14-15 - we see that one of the reasons is because we'll face opposition...

- Paul names Alexander the coppersmith as someone who wants to harm Paul and who strongly opposes our message.
- This reminds me of chapter 2, verse 26 - The devil is actively working against us (there are people whom he's trapped and are unknowingly doing his will).
  - And when we're going through a difficult time, the devil would love for us to isolate ourselves and not gather as a church.

- The devil may be whispering lies to us - Telling us that gathering as a church on Sundays would not be helpful but only be a distraction, or that it's better if other brothers and sisters don't know what's happening in our lives.
- But brothers and sisters, the church is a powerful weapon that God has provided for us in this race that we're fighting through.
  - When we're in need of help or when we're in sin, the opposite thing we want to do is to not gather as a church.

We're meant to fight the good fight and run this race together.

However, we should be aware that no matter how reliable our brothers and sisters are, there are times when we can still disappoint one another.

Look at verse 16 - At Paul's first defense on trial, no one came to stand by him, but everyone left him.

- Where was the brothers and sisters from the church in Rome?
- It doesn't mean that everyone there abandoned their faith and left Paul, but they're most likely feeling fearful for their own lives. They don't want to be arrested either. So even though they're in support of Paul, they didn't dare to show up.

But look at verse 17 - It's in moments when others disappoint us that we're reminded that our trust is not ultimately in people, but in the Lord.

- Because that's when God shows us that He by Himself is sufficient for us.
- When everyone else has left Paul, The Lord is the one who stood by him (it's as if he's right there in the courtroom with him).
- This doesn't mean that the Lord just arrived at the courtroom in that moment. He has always been there with Paul every step of the way.

And it's the same with us, sometimes when we're going through a difficult time, we can forget that the Lord has always been with us.

And when we're anxious about the future, we tend to forget that God will continue to be with us.

- When we project ourselves into a future scenario, we tend to forget to project God into that future as well.
- We question, "How can I ever get through this problem at work or in my marriage or with my children or with my friend?"
- Brothers and sisters in Christ - is there something about tomorrow that's making you anxious?
  - Don't forget that Lord Jesus will be with you. And our Heavenly Father will be watching over us. And the Holy Spirit will continue to dwell in us.
    - Look at verse 22 - "The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you."
- How should that re-orient your view of your trials?
  - We can get anxious if we forget that God is good, He is sovereign, He is with us, and He is gracious.

But take a look at the second half of verse 17 - I don't want this to sound therapeutic. As if God is present in our lives just to make us feel better.

- He's present with us and strengthens us because He has a purpose for us.
- "So that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it."
  - So as Paul relies on the Lord's strength and is assured that he's with Him... What he has in mind is still his call to preach the Word.

Look at verse 18 - Paul is confident. And he says, "The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into His heavenly Kingdom."

- Not that we'll never suffer or face trials. But when we do, God will rescue us.
- And pay attention to what Paul means here.
  - To Paul, him being rescued does not mean escaping prison alive (it's clear that he expected his life on Earth to come to an end).
  - The language he's using is about the eternal life to come.
  - He's talking about how God will not abandon him in light of eternity, but he'll safely bring him home to Heaven, where he'll be face to face with Jesus and his fellow brothers and sisters, including Timothy and Titus and Mark and Luke...
    - They're not always together in this life, but the Lord will bring us all together safely into His heavenly home, where we'll be with our God and our spiritual family forever.

### **Conclusion**

As we conclude, some of us may be asking, "How can Paul be so sure?"

The answer... is because of Jesus.

Let's look again to verse 7 - It's interesting that...

- Paul doesn't say... I have won the fight - only that he fought in the fight.
- Paul doesn't say... I have won the race - only that he completed it.
- His emphasis is not on what he himself accomplished, but it's in his faith that he has kept until the end...

His faith is that Jesus has won the fight; Jesus has won the race and secured our crown of righteousness.

How did he do that? By dying on the cross for the sins of his people.

<pause>

I mentioned earlier that on the cross, Jesus said "It is finished." But have you ever wondered - Why did Jesus have to die?

- Yes, his people have sinned. But couldn't God just speak and say, "It is finished" and forgive all of His people's sins without Jesus having to die on the cross?

Well, no. Because our sins justly deserve punishment. The punishment for sinning against the eternal God is eternity in Hell. If God is truly just, then He must punish sin and evil. If not, He's not perfectly just. But Jesus - who is fully man and fully God - took the punishment that his people deserve.

He lived a perfect life without sin so when he died he didn't die for his own sins but for ours. And his righteousness is now counted as ours. So that whoever believes in Jesus as Lord and Savior will not be punished in Hell, but will have eternal life in Heaven. We'll be resurrected just as Jesus rose from the dead and is victorious over sin and death.

If you have not yet put your faith in Christ, I invite you to respond to the Good News of Jesus.

This is why Paul was so confident. His faith is in the Lord who took on the crown of thorns so that we may have his crown of righteousness.

And this same Jesus who died for us continues to stand with us.

And now the proper response is to love and honor him. How can we do that? By orienting our lives around the preaching of God's Word and the people of God.

And as we do, may... "The Lord be with your Spirit. Grace be with you [all]."

Let's pray...