

PREACH THE WORD

2 TIMOTHY 4:1-4 • TV169A

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2 Timothy 4:1-4

“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”

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I want you to open your Bible with me this morning to the **Book of 2 Timothy**. I will be speaking from the **4th Chapter of the Book of 2 Timothy** and reading **verses 1 through 4**.

Here is our subject: I am speaking on the subject **“PREACH THE WORD.”**

In this second epistle to young Timothy, the apostle exhorts this young man to *“preach the word.”* He says in **verse 1**: *“I charge thee therefore before God, and before the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word.”*

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“Be instant (faithful) in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers (gather to themselves teachers and preachers to satisfy their liking and to agree with their error) having itching ears. They will turn away from the truth and turn to fables (manmade fiction).”

My friends; I am convinced that the greatest blessing God can give to people, a nation, a community, or a church is to give them a faithful, sincere, truthful and God-sent preacher of the Gospel. Why do I say this? There are several reasons:

First of all: Men are saved through the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

That is what the Scripture teaches; men are saved through the preaching of the Gospel. Paul said in **Romans 1:16**; *“I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”*

Then, in **1 Corinthians 1:21**, the apostle wrote; *“It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”*

When our Master sent His disciples out to preach, this is what He said to them; *“all authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized; (he that believeth what); he that believeth this gospel.”*

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved and he that believeth not shall be damned.”
So, men are saved through the preaching of the Gospel.

Secondly: True faith comes by hearing the Gospel. Paul wrote in **Romans 10**; *“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved but how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard and how shall they hear without a preacher?”*

Then, in **verse 17** of that same chapter he wrote; *“Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”* Men are saved by the preaching of the Gospel. True faith comes after hearing the Gospel and spiritual growth comes through the preaching of the Gospel.

In **1 Peter Chapter 2** the apostle Peter said; *“Desire the sincere milk of the word that you may grow thereby.”*

Thirdly: Not only that, but comfort comes through the Scripture. In **1 Thessalonians 4** Paul said after he had talked about the coming of the Lord Jesus and the resurrection of the dead, he said; *“wherefore, comfort one another with these words.”* These words bring comfort. These words bring comfort and strength to the hearts of God’s people. Whose words; God’s words?

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Fourthly: Not only that, but assurance comes through the Word. In **1 John 5:13** the apostle wrote; *“These things have I written to you that believe that you may know that you have eternal life.”* The hope of our day is that God will rise up some preachers who will return to the preaching of the Gospel of His dear Son.

Now; just as the giving of a faithful, sincere, God-called preacher, is the greatest blessing that God can send upon a people. I am convinced that the greatest judgment that can fall upon a people is to be left in the hands of blind, unregenerate, covetous, false preacher.

Now; all the way through the Word we have warning after warning about false preachers. Our Lord said, *“Take heed what you hear.”* Take heed who you listen to. John said, *“Try the spirits, whether they be of God.”*

Now, let me just show you a few Scriptures on this subject:

Jeremiah; I believe that Jeremiah warned more about false preachers and false prophets than any of the other writers. He said, *“They are covetous men. They seek applause, they seek fame, they seek praise, and they seek men’s possessions. They are covetous men.”* He said, *“From the prophets, even to the priests, they are all covetous.”*

Not only that, he said; these false preachers cry *“peace, peace, when there is no peace.”* They give men false confidence and false assurance. They encourage men in false refuges and in false hiding places by telling them that they are all right, that they have nothing to fear.

Not only that; he said, *“They deny the judgment of God. They deny the wrath of God against sin.”*

But still further, Jeremiah is speaking, when he says; they do not preach the Word of God. God said, *“I did not send them and rather than preaching the word of God they preach their dreams and their imaginations and their visions.”*

Here is the tragic thing! After all of that, Jeremiah said; *“These false teachers and preachers are covetous men. They are men who deny the judgment. They are men who give false peace. They are men who deny that God’s wrath is against sin. They do not preach the word of God but their own visions and dreams.”* Then he said this tragic thing; *“people like it; the people love to have it so.”*

This is what our Master said; He said, *“I come in my Father’s name and you receive me not. Let another come in his own name and him you will receive. This is condemnation; light has come into this world. Christ is that light, but men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil.”*

Paul warned the Galatians about false prophets. He said; *“Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel (than that gospel of Christ Jesus), let him be accursed.”*

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Peter, James, and John, all warned that false preachers and teachers would invade the church and they would invade the church by creeping in. They would draw away disciples after themselves.

But, I want you to listen to this now; Jeremiah warned about false prophets. Paul, over and over again warned about false prophets, as did Peter, James, and John, but the strongest warnings in the Scripture about false preachers and false teachers came from the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

I want to read you a few:

Listen to **Matthew Chapter 7**: Our Lord said; *“Beware of false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly they are ravening wolves. You shall know them by their fruits.”*

Then, if you have your Bible there, I want you to turn to **Matthew 23**. I would like very much for everybody listening to this program today that has a Bible, to turn with me to the **23rd chapter of Matthew**.

Our Lord Jesus Christ deals with false preachers and false prophets by bringing accusations and charges against the false prophets and preachers of His day. He speaks of the Pharisees; He speaks of the religious leaders of His day.

The whole **23rd chapter of Matthew**, the whole chapter, is directed towards these false prophets, exposing them, point, after point, after point. Our Lord Jesus levels charges against these false preachers and false teachers.

Now; I want you to listen to some of them here in **Matthew 23 beginning with verse 2**.

He said in **verse 2**; (do you have it there?), **Matthew 23: verse 2**. He says, *“They sit in Moses’ seat.”* In other words, they pretend to be prophets. They pretend to be servants of God.

My friend; it takes more than a title to make a man a prophet. It takes more than calling him “reverend” or calling him even “pastor” or calling him by some other title. It takes more than that to make a preacher and a prophet.

It takes more than an office. It takes more than a position to make a man a prophet. It takes God’s anointing. It takes God Almighty’s setting him apart and God Almighty giving him a message.

What was said of John the Baptist? There was a man named John; right, but *“there was a man sent from God whose name was John.”* There is a lot of difference there. There was a man named John, that is one thing but there was *“a man sent from God whose name was John.”*

This is what our Lord says about these false prophets; they pretend to be what they are not. They sit in Moses’ seat but they don’t know Moses’ God and they don’t have Moses’ message. What’s more; they don’t have Moses’ heart.

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Watch another charge in **verse 5**: He says, *“All their works they do to be seen of men.”* They build impressive buildings. They promote impressive programs. They advertise themselves. They wear special clothing to attract attention. They do everything publically to get attention from men.

They do their works, their prayers, to be seen of men. They always want recognition for what they are doing. They want to appear to be religious. Nothing is done in secret. Nothing is done *“as unto the Lord.”*

Everything is accounted for. Everything is impressive. Everything is advertised. Everything is revealed to the public. They do these things to be seen of men.

The Master said, *“When men see them and when men praise them and when men applaud them, they have their reward;”* that’s what they were seeking and that’s their reward.

Look at **verse 6**: *“They also love the chief seats in the synagogue and they love to hold high offices and they love to be called by religious titles.”* They like to be called “Rabbi.” They like to be called “teacher.”

In our day, they love to be called “Doctor” and “Reverend,” “Cardinal,” “Bishop,” “Superintendent,” and all these other names but our Lord Jesus said; *“He that is greatest among you; (he that would aspire to be the greatest among you), let him be your servant.”*

Is not this the revelation of the religion of our day? They love to be called by high-sounding titles. They love to hold high positions. They love the high seats in the synagogue. They like to run things and run people.

Not only that; look at **verses 14 and 15**: Listen to this right here; *“They devour widow’s houses.”* They support themselves and their lavish programs and steal worlds of money from poor widows and simple people.

I received a letter from a dear lady in this television audience who told me that her mother was on Social Security and her mother was sending out of her Social Security check every week, a certain amount of money, to keep a man on television who is a multi-millionaire.

He wears diamond rings, and thousand dollar suits. He drives Cadillac’s and lives in Penthouses. This dear widow, out of her Social Security check, sends offerings to this man. *“They devour widow’s houses.”* They support them in their lavish programs and dream world with money from poor widows and simple people.

They do their praying holding hands in public to be seen and heard of men. They compass sea and land to make converts to their brand of fundamentalism and religion and it is an abomination to God Almighty; it ought to be in every thinking individual.

Is this not our day; is this not a description of our religious leaders? Their goal is reformation.

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Our Lord said **verse 25**, *“They make clean the outside of the cup; they appear righteous to men; they appear beautiful to men, but inside, (inside, in their hearts) they are full of dead men’s bones. They are like a whited sepulcher that appears beautiful to men but within they are like a sepulcher full of dead men’s bones.”*

They appear righteous outwardly. They are interested in making clean the outside of the cup and totally ignoring and neglecting the inside.

That is what we are trying to do today; most religious leaders are trying to legislate morality; they are trying to clean up the nation, clean up the world, clean up the outside, and clean up the cities, that they may appear righteous to men.

Let me tell you something; you can’t legislate salvation; you can’t legislate a new heart. We are not in the business of cleaning up the world; we are in the business of preaching the gospel and bringing men to see Christ; we are in the heart business.

That’s where the work of salvation is done. *“God looketh not on the outward countenance.”* You can appear to be your best in the sight of men and *“that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination to God who looks on the heart.”*

God said, *“Keep your heart, out of it, the issues of life.”* That’s my business; that is my objective and that is my goal, not to put all of the evil businesses out of business but to bring men to know Christ. If men come to know Christ they will go out of the evil business. That’s the difference; we just start in different places.

Verse 29; listen to this: They brag on dead prophets. They brag on Moses, they brag on Abraham, they brag on Isaiah, and they brag on the apostles. They brag on Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and Huss. They brag on Knox, Spurgeon, and Bunyan and kill living prophets who are sent in the name of God to preach that same message.

Right in the middle of all this, right in the middle of it, our Lord Jesus Christ, right in the middle of all these charges that He levels at these false prophets and false preachers, whose goal is their gain, whose objective is their own praise, who know nothing of the glory of God, who seek not the good of their hearers but they seek the gold of their hearers, right in the middle of all this, our Lord Jesus Christ levels a charge against these false preachers.

That is the most convicting and powerful charge of all. It sums up all the whole religious problem then and now. I believe it is **verse 23**; look at it: He said, “You take care of the outward forms of religion. You are very careful to tithe *‘anise, and mint, and cumin.’*”

You are very careful to take care of all the outward forms and ceremonies of religion, but you neglect and you ignore the weightier; watch that word *“weightier matters”* of the Word. You ignore the weightier; you ignore the most important matters.

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You are very careful to set aside your ten percent of each thing. You will give God what you call “God’s part.” You will go to the services. You will carry on your ceremonies, your traditions, and your customs.

You are very careful about all these outward forms and ceremonies, but “*you neglect and ignore the weightier, (the heavier and the most important matters of the Bible), justice, mercy, and faith.*”

I am asking you; Is this not true today? Listen to the average preacher as they harp on tithing, “if you will tithe, especially if you will send it to me God will bless you. If you will do this, God will bless you. If you will do that, God will heal you. If you will do that, God will prosper you.

If you will do this, by God’s favors; you can buy God’s communion, you can buy God’s prosperity, and you can buy health. You can do all these things, all of these outward forms and things. They appeal to men’s flesh.

What do you hear today about these “*weightier matters?*” When have you heard a preacher preach on justice, mercy, and faith? This is the Master speaking. This is our Lord; He said, “I know you; I know you false prophets and preachers. I know your objectives; I know your goals; I know your hearts.”

“You have gone to all of this extreme to tithe, to fast, to give alms, and go through the ceremonies but you have neglected, you have ignored *the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy, and faith.*”

Let’s look at these three things. Let me deal with these three things today:

First of all: Our Lord said, “*Justice!*”

What are we talking about here, justice? What is the Master talking about? He is not talking about justice in the courts. No, that is not what he is talking about; we need justice in the courts but that is not what he is talking about; that is not one of “*the weightier matters of the law.*”

We are not talking about justice between men or nations. Christ is speaking here of God’s justice! You are driving bargains with God. You are trying to buy God’s favors. You are doing all these different things outwardly and you have ignored this question; you have ignored the holy justice of God.

You have ignored a clear-cut question that is over and over again in God’s Word in **Job 9:2**; listen, “*How can man be just with God?*” Listen to **Job 25:4**: “*How can man be justified with God? How can he be clean that is born of a woman?*”

“*Behold the moon, it shineth not. The stars are not clean in God’s sight; how much more abominable and filthy is man who drinks iniquity like water.*”

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How can a sinner be just before God? How can His justice be honored? How can justice be satisfied? How can God receive sinners into His communion? That's a pretty good question. In **Romans 3:26**; *"How can God be just and justifier of the ungodly?"*

Psalm 85:10: *"How can mercy and truth meet together? How can righteousness and peace kiss each other?"* That is justice. Have you heard anything about that lately?

Some false preacher has been telling you to tithe and God will bless you. Has he mentioned God's justice lately? Has he mentioned the fact that God *"will by no means clear the guilty?"* Has he mentioned *"that the soul that sinneth shall surely die?"*

Has he mentioned that God Almighty will punish every transgression? *"Every transgression shall receive a just recompense of reward."* There is justice to be met. There is judgment to be faced. *"It is appointed unto men once to die, after that judgment,* (justice, righteousness, and holiness)."

No sir, he hasn't because it has never entered his mind, because God didn't send him. When God sends a man he deals with God's justice. That is his first purpose, to deal with God's justice.

God is holy; God is just and righteous. It is not possible for God to manifest His love and mercy at the expense of His justice and His holiness. *"God will by no means clear the guilty;"* that is what the Bible says.

Whatever Gospel you propose, whatever Gospel you advance; whatever Gospel you preach to men, it must, must, I repeat, honor God's law. That Gospel must satisfy God's justice. The living God cannot receive a single person who does not have a perfect righteousness before His law.

A holy God can have no communion or fellowship with a single person who is not justified before His throne. *"Who shall stand in his presence, he that hath clean hands and a pure heart?"*

My friend; this is why Christ came. *"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief. Thou shalt call his name Jesus; he shall save his people from their sins. The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."*

"He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him. By his stripes we are healed." By His stripes justice is satisfied. By His obedience the law is honored.

Christ is our righteousness. God requires it, God demands it, and God shall have it in Christ. *"By the disobedience of one we were made sinners. By the obedience of one we were made righteous."*

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Christ is our sanctification. *“He is able to keep you from falling and present you before his father’s throne, holy and without blame.”* Christ is our justification; *“In the fullness of the time God sent his Son into the world, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were born under the law that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”* Justice!

Oh, our Lord said; “you have been preaching all of these legal things, keep a day, tithe, do all of these different things, and God will do this and God will do so.”

Wait a minute! God’s justice demands satisfaction. God’s holy law demands to be honored. All your tithing, giving, going, witnessing, and all of your ceremonies, forms, and religion, will by no means satisfy God’s justice nor honor God’s law; you are still a sinner and you still have to face the judgment.

But, in Christ there is no judgment. If Christ has met God’s judgment it is satisfied. If Christ has met God’s justice it is honored. If Christ has met God’s law it has been honored completely. Justice is satisfied!

All right: Mercy!

I know that we are supposed to show mercy and *“be merciful as your Father in heaven is merciful.”* But, there is something deeper here; there is something, as Christ said, “weightier than just mercy between men.”

What is it? Let’s see; in **Matthew 9**, *“It came to pass as Jesus sat at meat in the house that many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees (or religious leaders) saw him sitting with these sinners and publicans they said to his disciples:*

“Why does your Master eat with publicans and sinners?” When the Master heard this He said, *“The well do not a physician but they that are sick. Go ye and learn what that means. I will have mercy and not sacrifice for I am come not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.”*

Most of today’s preaching denies man’s guilt before God, that’s right! Most of today’s preaching is addressed to the good, not the bad. Most of today’s preaching offers blessings in return for service. Most of today’s preaching calls on men to do something for God rather than God to do something for men, showing his mercy.

Our Lord said, *“The Pharisee stood in the temple and talked about how good he was and how God was obligated to reward his goodness. The publican stood in the temple and would not so much lift his eyes to heaven but smote upon his breast (and called for the one thing that Christ said, He came to do); God be merciful to me a sinner.”*

“I will have mercy,” Christ said. *“I’ve not come to call the righteous but sinners. I’ve come to show mercy; I will be merciful.”* This is God’s glory, His mercy.

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We are not in the market for justice. We are not in the market for rewards; we are shut up to mercy. We are shut up to His mercy and that is what He is talking about, mercy. Do you know anything about mercy?

Have you ever sought mercy? Have you ever cried for mercy? Have you ever needed mercy? Have you ever required mercy? Have you ever been lost; then you know something about mercy. If you haven't you know nothing about mercy.

If you don't know anything about mercy, you know nothing about the fountain of mercy who is Jesus Christ.

Now, here is the last word: faith.

Not works, faith. Not human merit, faith. Not law, faith. *"We are justified by faith."* There are four times in God's Word that it says, *"the just shall live by faith. By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified."* We are justified by faith in Christ. *"He that believeth on the Son hath life and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life but the wrath of God abideth on him."*

Let no man deceive you. If righteousness before God, if acceptance with God comes by works, *"then Christ died in vain."*

That is how serious it is, faith, faith, faith! *"If you can believe, all things are possible to them that believe!"* Do you believe?