

## 2 Timothy 4:1-2 'Preach The Word Of God!'

In 2 Timothy 3 v16-17 we learn that unlike other literature, God's Word is useful for a life lived for Jesus! It is not to be mused over or pondered and then forgotten. Because it is the Word of God, in which is our life's breath. Deuteronomy 3:8 "for man does not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceeds from the mouth of God". Yes it is our handbook and road map for life! It is "useful for teaching, rebuking correcting and training in righteousness" So it is not in our own strength, or our intellect or fine sounding arguments that we must rely upon, no. We come to God in His Word through prayer, in each and every situation of our lives.

And we learn that God's Word is complete. There is no lack in it. And when rebuking and being rebuked, we "must be quick to listen and slow to speak, and slow to become angry, because anger does not produce the righteous life which God requires" (James Ch 1) So again, it's "useful, and profitable" for us in every aspect of life. God's Word is complete! It needs no outside help or crutches to support its veracity. It's Truth is timeless, absolute and inerrant. To seek to add to it or take away from it is foolish and inherently evil, Revelation 22 v18-19 tell us.

All of God's Word is "breathed out" by Him. The key is found in v17 of ch 3: "so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work". Paul's goal was to encourage his son in the Lord Timothy, because as we know, many trials and tribulations have come before the young man. He is under tremendous pressure. He is struggling in his faith, so he needs to hold on with both hands, (even grip with his teeth) to the truths of God, because falsehood abounds!

Yes difficulties will come to all of those who seek to truly honour Christ in their lives. But hold on to God's Truth though everyone else fall away, because by faith, it is our only hope! And also the only thing in which we can have absolute trust, that God will equip us for this life in preparation for heaven.

This brings us to our text for the week. 2 Timothy chapter 4:1-2, 'Preach The Word Of God!' In v1 we read: "In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus". Brothers and sisters, notice the very first thing that Paul affirms in this his final farewell to his son in the faith: God is present! Some of you may remember that Bette Midler song from some years ago, which used to really get up my nose. The lyrics went something like this: 'From a distance God is watching us'. So of course the implication is that, yes, God exists, but He is way, way out there in the cosmos somewhere. Even perhaps peering through the many millions upon millions of years of space and time, as the Pagan scientists and the evolutionist want us to believe. Even hoping upon hope, that mankind just might one day come to their senses and come back to Him! Well what rot. What utter rubbish Paul tells us. No, "In the presence of God". Yes, God is present. He is not missing in action. Not only is God present, He is eternally omnipresent! He was present, He is present, and He will continue to be present everywhere all the time. Yes from eternity past, present and future. Exodus 3:14 (which I referred to last week), God told my Moses to tell the people "I AM has sent you" "I am WHO I AM. And with Jesus taking up this very Name for Himself in John ch 8:58: "I tell you the truth, before Abraham was, I AM." In John 1:1-3 "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made. Without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life and that life was the light of men."

And finally from Gen.1:1-2 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep and the Spirit of God was

hovering over the waters.” So just as the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove at His Baptism, so too at the creation of the world itself, (as in that image of a great eternal bird, hovering over the primordial sea, out of which all things were brought to life), God was present! Yes Father Son and Holy Spirit, eternally present everywhere all the time! O brothers and sisters, what a tremendous weapon in the armoury of Satan to have mankind believe that poor old God is passively, (even impotently), longingly peering at us from a far off place, unable to get mankind to recognise Him!

Well, no. “In the presence of God, and of Christ Jesus.” So the next thing which Paul would have us know is that the Father and the Son are inseparable. And again, they are both present, all the time. As the eternal witnesses to all that goes on in their creation! And the third thing which I want us to be very clear in. Is Jesus` Role, (even His permanent role), until it is done away with and fulfilled. And it's that Jesus is the Eternal Judge of all creation” “In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who will judge the living and the dead.” Hebrews 10:28-30 “Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy, on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished, who has trampled the son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said it is mine to avenge, I will repay, and again, the Lord will judge his people. It is a dreadful thing to fall into their hands of the living God.” Yes, who will repay? “The Lord the righteous judge.”

You know, it's interesting that Jesus spoke of judgement and hell in a ratio of 3 to 1 times in comparison to heaven. And yet so few today preach of Jesus as the Eternal Judge. Why do you think this is? Well may I suggest, that it is easier to sell a baby laying in a manger, and gentle Jesus meek and mild, than it is to portray Him as the One who holds the key to death and hell. Revelation 1:18 “I am the living One, I was dead and behold I am alive forever and ever. I hold the keys of death and hades.” So Jesus is the Eternal Judge, God`s Judge.” Who will judge the living and the dead.”

Do you remember that rugby player Israel Folau? He was only a very new Christian at the time, but he bore the brunt of the hatred and condemnation of so many people and why? Because he simply spoke the truth concerning the judgement of God, about homosexuality. And can you see? What the young man did was in effect an act of love. Yes he simply spoke the truth, that unless these people living in that state of abomination repent, and turn from their way of life in which they have chosen to live, they are going to hell!

What did John the Baptist say to the scribes and Pharisees coming out to him in the desert? Matthew 3:7-8 “you brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.” And Jesus` Own words, once John had been put in prison by Herod Matthew 4:17 “from that time on Jesus began to preach. Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is near”

It was a warning, as we saw some weeks ago. That the judgement of God was coming and that they had better change their lives and ways, and come to God insincerely or else there will be eternal consequences! And in his own way, that's what that poor young fellow Israel Folau was doing. He was warning people that there is a judgement coming and that the time is short. And it's time to change and come to Jesus now as Saviour, lest they fall into His Hands as Judge! And notice who Christ is going to judge, “both the living and the dead” So from Adam, to the last person who has ever been born until Jesus comes again. So this will be a universal judgement from which no one will escape! Not demons not angels nor mankind.

Now the seventh-day Adventists claim, that once you're dead you're dead. What then do we do with this text and many others like it? This idea poses a tremendous problem, because to hold such a view is opposed to Biblical Truth. God's Own truth . And may I put forward the reason why they claim this? It is because it's not popular to speak of a God, (that lest we come to Him through Jesus), who will judge man`s sin forever! No it doesn't sound warm, nice, cosy and comfy. And surely that's the point. Hell is not the place where you want to go. You will not be drinking at the bar with all the boys.

Mark 9:42-48 we read "And if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around his neck. If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. And if your foot causes you to sin cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the Kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched."

And friends, notice how Jesus says in Mark ch 8 "their worm." So there is a sense to which there is a personalised hell for everyone who goes there. Yes Beloved, Jesus warned of judgement and hell far more often than he spoke of heaven. This then beggars belief that so many preachers today are silent about judgement and hell. Jesus never was! So, "In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who will judge the living in the dead, and in view of his appearing and his Kingdom."

Brothers and sisters, did you notice the sense of Paul`s urgency here? Yes can you feel the urgency in what he is saying? "In view of his appearing." Yes Jesus is coming again. It's even as though Paul saw Him on the way back. In Revelation 6:12-17 we read "I watched as he opened the 6th seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, and the stars in the sky fell to the earth, as late figs dropped from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind . The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. Then the Kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the lamb. For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?" Yes it is as though he prophetically saw Matthew 24:30-31 "At that time the sign of the Son of man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other"

Yes, there is this urgency to what he is saying to his beloved son in the Lord Timothy. 'I can see Him coming', he may well have said. 'And I can see His Kingdom fulfilled in His appearing. So now is not the time for laziness. Now is not the time for cowardice. Now is not the time to fall back. Now is not the time for silence! But in full view of all of these things Timothy', and "in the presence of God I give you this charge: preach the word."

So having dealt with every issue that Timothy was facing. His lack of years in the view of Ephesian eldership, his timidity because of his lack of age. The importance of holding to sound doctrine in the face of much opposition from without, but also from within the church. Yes to hold onto sound doctrine, because many evil impostors were circling the flock, (even like those savage wolves) which Peter warns us of in Acts 20:22-32. And that Paul himself was an example to his son in the faith of holding on to God's Truth, even in the face of tremendous hardships and dangers. Timothy had indeed witnessed the price which Paul had paid. Yes he was different to all of those evil impostors

with their hidden agendas, which were attacking the church at Ephesus. That Paul was all about serving Jesus faithfully, as he sought to love the brethren. And yet nonetheless chapter 3:12 we read "in fact everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." Yes, that's just how it is, and yet, when everything is said and done dear friend, with all that God Himself has supplied you with and done for you through Jesus, and in the face of every trial and temptation to give up the fight, "I give you this charge, preach the word." Paul is telling him that as with all preachers and teachers of God's Word, he has a God given responsibility to raise his voice, even raise the roof with his preaching and teaching and declarations of Jesus, and all the more in such evil times!

So the louder and the more vehement the opposition, (as it is in Australia today), the more insidious and the more morally corrupt and evil people become, even so "preach the Word." Yes the louder and more militant the opposition may become nonetheless cry out all the more. Because you are a preacher, and you have been called by God to preach and honour Him and not man! And of course, this is what this powerful and final exhortation from Paul to Timothy has been all about. To encourage, and to remind him of who he was. A preacher of Christ's soul saving, and life changing gospel! All the other stuff is yes important, and don't neglect your duties to your flock as overseer and Shepherd under the guidance of God's Holy Spirit. But when all is said and done my dear son, you are a preacher, and there is no higher honour. So first and foremost what you are called to do and must do, is preach! Yes "preach the word of God."

Well Beloved, how does this apply to those of us who are not specifically called to be preachers and teachers? Is this a passage which only has application for full time pastors and workers of the gospel? Well no. In one of our church bulletins years ago there was an article in which the preacher spoke of the importance (of yes the crucial importance of a follower of Jesus, a Christian), to be always looking to bring the name of Jesus into play so to speak. In any and every situation in which we might find ourselves. And he explained, that the reason that it is so important is because it is the Name of Jesus, which not only confronts people with their sin, it is also His Name which convicts people of their sin and sinfulness in the light and the presence of our sin-hating God!

So even though we may not have been called by Him to specifically preach His Word, there is a vast array of everyday situations in life in which we find ourselves, through which we may honour and declare His Name. Even in just everyday conversation. And by doing this, we prove that like Paul in Romans 1:16 we are "not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the Salvation of everyone who believes" And in Acts chapt.8-13 (which we looked at some weeks ago), we also read: "then Peter filled with the Holy Spirit said to them, "Rulers and elders of the people: If we are being called to account for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and being asked how he was healed, then know this: you and all the people of Israel. It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. He is the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone. Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved. When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realise that they were unschooled ordinary men, they were astonished and took note that these men had been with Jesus."

Yes brothers and sisters , our family, our friends, our neighbours, indeed our enemies, need to be confronted with the Name of Jesus, the Eternal Judge. They need to be made aware that there is an eternal judgement coming. They need to be awakened from their deathly sleep and be confronted with the truth that they are responsible for the Saviour's death. And we can, and we must do this. Simply by seeking through prayer, to bring our Saviour's Name into our everyday conversations with people, whoever they may be! But we must be prayerfully seeking to do it, as I've said many times

now. And then when given Providence by God. to do it. And not shrink back. And this is, in a broader sense to preach the word of God. We may not be literally preaching, but we are boldly testifying, to our Beloved Saviour`s Name!

As we saw last week the people prayed, that God would give them the ability to preach the word with boldness. Yes, “in view of his appearing and his Kingdom I give you this charge: preach the word.” ‘In the midst of all falsehood, intimidation and hardship Timothy, don't hold back. Preach the word of God fearlessly, faithfully and without constraint. The church is relying upon you to feed them God's truth and if they are not fed by you, they will feed upon what the impostors are seeking to provide. Which as you know, is not the Word of God!’ “Be prepared in season and out of season” Paul writes.

Can you see, this again speaks of that urgency which I mentioned earlier that Paul is conveying to Timothy. “In view of his appearing.” If Jesus` return is imminent, the reality is that Salvation for some is slipping away. So we must be “prepared in season and out of season” to give an account to all for the hope which we have because of Jesus, beyond this life. And friends, surely the key lies in this “being prepared” And I take this in season and out of season to mean prepared in his formal preaching and teaching, but also in general, as he interacts with the flock under his care, (and indeed, as I mentioned earlier), with all people in any and every situation. And this being prepared, may I suggest is all about his personal devotions and searching in the scriptures . Even his personal walk with God!

Friends, it's no different for us. If we are going to be prepared for service for our Master and His Work of the gospel, then saturation through our diggings within the Bible is what we need. It's a necessity and also what is called for. The lifesaver must firstly be able to swim with strength and over a long period of time, before they can rescue someone who is drowning. Having learned of and then studied the dangers of rips and currents and undertows, they can then brave the waves when called upon. But our rescue devices are the Bible and prayer! Yes with these, as from ch.3:17 we must be thoroughly equipped. Yes “prepared in season and out of season, correct rebuke and encourage with great patience and careful instruction.”

Paul knew all about obstinate people. His battles with the legalists and Judaizers were well documented. But that's not what he is speaking of here. No, as in verse 16 of chapter 3, when he instructed Timothy that, “all scripture is God breathed and useful for teaching rebuking correcting and training in righteousness” well now he reminds him again, that when he is involved in these situations to do this in a manner so as to encourage. As we've seen throughout the years, the goal is always , (not to crush or humiliate), but to humbly bring back into understanding and to build up, that wayward or misguided believer! Look at what he says, “with great patience”. No it's never about your pride and your vanity my son, Paul is telling him, it's always about the flock under your care. And seeking to reinstate them into the body of the church, the body of Jesus. Who is of course, the Rock and foundation of all of his dealings. Either within or without the church. It must always be careful instruction or sound teaching and doctrine, from the word of God!

Yes all scripture is God breathed. So dear friends, as Paul charged Timothy so I encourage you to preach the Word of God! Let`s Pray!