

**22<sup>ND</sup> PASTORAL CARE CONFERENCE – OCTOBER 2016**  
**MESSAGE SERIES – THE EFFECTIVE PREACHER AND PREACHING**  
**SPEAKER – LIM KOU**

**MESSAGE 2 – LEARNING FROM PAUL’S CHARGE TO TIMOTHY ON PREACHING**

**PAUL’S CHARGE TO TIMOTHY**

2 Tim 4:1-5 – a helpful passage on preacher and preaching.

Paul – an outstanding, experienced, faithful and effective preacher – instructs Timothy on how to be a faithful and effective preacher.

**2 Timothy 4:1–5**

1 I solemnly 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, exhort, with great patience and instruction.

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,

4 and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

5 But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

**Seriousness of responsibility**

*(v 1) ‘I solemnly charge you, in the presence of God ...’*

‘solemnly charge’

- Preaching is a significant responsibility – not to be taken lightly or discharged without great care. The consequences and implications are serious and far-reaching.

‘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’

- Preaching is a matter of great concern to God and the Lord Jesus. It has significant bearing on readiness of believers for the final judgement, Christ’s Second Coming and how believers fare in God’s kingdom.
- Paul’s charge to Timothy is ‘in the presence of God’ – not merely personal but in God’s presence and with His approval. The instructions that follow are of deep concern to God and in line with the will of God.
- Christ the Judge and final judgement – Timothy the preacher will have to give an account of how he fulfilled the ministry entrusted to him by the Lord.

**Substance of preaching – God’s message**

*(v 2a) ‘preach the word’*

‘Preach’ means proclaim, declare – authoritative proclamation of the truth.

‘The word’

- Refers to the gospel, God’s message to man – what God desires to communicate to mankind and believers.

- The source, origin of the message is God – not man’s ideas, opinions, suggestions, philosophical speculations.
- At the center of God’s message or word to man is Christ – the Word of God.
- That is why Paul says in 1 Cor 2:2: ‘I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified’.
- The main elements in God’s message have to do with who Christ is, His teaching, His death and resurrection and their implications, God’s plan for man in Christ.

‘Preach the word’

- The true preacher is one called by the Lord as His servant, spokesman, to proclaim authoritatively the truth, God’s message to man.

### **Readiness at all times**

*(v 2b) ‘be ready in season and out of season’*

‘be ready’

- Be alert, properly equipped, able to fulfil the task well
- Whatever the circumstances, whatever may confront him, whatever he may have to go through

‘in season and out of season’

- Whether in favorable or unfavorable and difficult contexts
- Whether the message and preacher are well received or not
- Opposition can come from man or powers of darkness or both – directed at the preacher and the ministry of the word, and the message or truth being communicated

To be ready in season and out of season, the preacher must be equipped and trained by the Lord.

### **The need to exhort and reprove**

*(2c) ‘reprove, rebuke, exhort’*

Lexicon: ‘exhort’ = request, appeal to, urge, implore, entreat, exhort, comfort, cheer up, encourage.

All these senses have their place in true preaching.

Preaching is not merely presentation of truth. It has direction and goal – that of moving, persuading, urging hearers to respond to the truth and God’s call. At times, the preacher has to reprove and rebuke.

Paul described his own approach to the ministry:

#### **2 Corinthians 5:10-11**

10 For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

11 Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men ...

In v 10, Paul says we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ and be recompensed for how we have lived our life on earth. Then in the next verse, he talks about persuading men.

Preaching is an important means God uses to persuade men – to prepare all of us so we can give a good account of ourselves at the final judgement.

## **The need for patience**

*(v 2d) 'with great patience and instruction'*

The preacher needs patience because:

- the work is not easy – many obstacles to overcome
- deep transformation of lives takes time
- some are slow to learn, fail repeatedly
- some lack diligence and seem to be getting nowhere
- some are even reactive, antagonistic, quarrelsome – pass negative, slanderous remarks

In the face of these challenges, the preacher must:

- not lose heart, despair, give up or slacken
- be longsuffering and persevering
- maintain his joy in the Lord

Those who are open will respond positively to consistent, effective preaching of the truth and bear good fruit. The depth of response may vary, but our labor in the Lord will not be in vain.

Important principles to bear in mind:

- Be faithful to the Lord and the ministry He has entrusted.
- Leave the rest to God and those at the receiving end.

We can only do what we can by God's grace – to the best of our ability. We cannot choose and decide for others, or live out their lives for them. Each person has to live his own life and finally give an account to God.

Be careful not to lament and be disappointed with others, yet in the end not being able to give a good account of our own lives when we meet the Lord.

## **Not pandering to hearers**

*(v 3-4) 'For the time will come ...'*

As we approach the Second Coming of Christ, negative features in hearers will become more common – unhealthy, improper attitudes become more pronounced.

'they will not endure sound doctrine'

- They do not appreciate sound preaching and teaching.
- They may be antagonistic and aroused by and against such preaching and teaching.

'wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires'

- They are attracted to people who preach and teach what they want to hear.
- Their primary concern is not truth or what God has to say – like Ahab.

'turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths'

- They reject the truth and are attracted to false teaching and myths.
- They open themselves up to deception – leading to their own destruction.

Beware what we are attracted to. What we like to hear may not be good for us. What we do not like to hear, what makes us uncomfortable, may be good for us.

What is important is truth and what God wants to communicate to us – whether we like or enjoy what we hear does not determine whether it is good for us.

If our attitude is right, we will long for what God wants to say to us. Whenever we recognise truth is being communicated, we will deeply appreciate it.

As Paul has advised Timothy, the true preacher must not pander to what the hearers like to hear. He must faithfully preach the Word – the truth God intends for the hearers.

### **Be sober, endure hardship and fulfill your ministry**

(v 5) 'But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry'.

The true preacher must look to the Lord to help him maintain a sober spirit at all times so that he can fare well in all situations. He must be prepared to persevere in the midst of trials and hardship so that he can fulfil the ministry entrusted to him by the Lord.

### **PREACHING IN THE LONG-TERM**

When the preacher preaches in the same congregation for several years, his messages should have the overall impact of:

- helping believers understand and gain insight into the truth
- motivating, urging and helping believers to respond to the truth and God's call

For maximum effectiveness over time, there should be wholesome coverage that helps in the development of personal lives and outworking of church life. But the emphasis of different messages can be different.

### **Messages with different emphasis**

- Messages that edify – providing spiritual refreshment and nourishment
- Messages that urge and help believers to deepen their faith and commitment to God
- Messages that emphasise personal application – directed at personal lives, searching out deficiencies in the heart, wrong attitudes and conduct, areas to work at, relationship with others, how to go through various situations
- Messages that lay doctrinal foundation – important truths and principles that address various issues and provide the basis for believers to build up their personal life and church life

In a given message, it is possible for all the elements to be present, but there can be different emphasis in different messages.

Different hearers may be appreciative of different kinds of messages at different times.

We should learn to appreciate and benefit from different kinds of messages for wholesome development and effective outworking.

### **CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS**

#### **1. Sometimes, what appears to be effective preaching may be primarily directed at eliciting an emotional or mental response**

Some preaching may appear to achieve effective result, but in reality, it is superficial and there is minimal change in heart.

The apparent positive outcome cannot stand up to testing – such as the cost of true discipleship, the trials of life, temptations of the flesh, opposition by the evil one.

*Preaching that is truly effective is preached with reliance on the Lord, and must aim at the response of the heart and commitment of the will. It must generate deep conviction based on the truth revealed by the Holy Spirit. It must be a deep response to God and the truth in the moral and spiritual realm.*

**2 Thessalonians 2:13**

But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.

Messages should help believers understand how to work out their lives and make good progress.

**2. When a preacher ministers the Word to a gathering of believers over an extended time, he should seek to communicate substantial truth and insight.**

The coverage must not be superficial, but must have substance and depth.

It must help believers to develop strong convictions, build their lives up to become stable and mature, firmly ground in the truth.

**Ephesians 4:14**

As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

**3. Preacher must preach with conviction in the power of the Holy Spirit, and the truths he preaches must mean much to the preacher himself.**

**1 Thessalonians 1:5**

for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.

The preacher's preparation and readiness for good and effective messages will be elaborated in subsequent messages.