

The Book of 2 Timothy
Lesson 6 - 2 Timothy 4:1-8
Prescription for a Healthy Church
Passing the Mantle

This chapter records the final message from the inspired pen of Paul. Shortly after dictating these words, Paul was martyred for the cause of Christ. It is no surprise, then, that we find in this chapter an intense personal appeal for Timothy's faithfulness to the Lord and to his mentor Paul.

Paul closed the previous chapter by exhorting Timothy to continue in the Word in his own personal life; now he exhorts him to share that Word with others. We must first receive before we can transmit. So important was the preaching of the Word to Paul and to the ministry of the church that he gave Timothy a charge—a “military command”—to keep on preaching the Word. And Paul called upon Christ to witness his charge to Timothy, reminding Timothy that Christ would one day return and test his ministry.

Why must we Christians proclaim the Word of God? *“Because the time will come”* when people will not want the Word of God. That time is upon us! Many church attenders do not want “healthy” doctrine; instead, they want religious entertainment from Christian performers who will tickle their ears. Too often the person who simply opens the Bible and teaches it is ignored, while the shallow religious entertainer becomes a celebrity. Verse 4 indicates that “itching ears” soon become “deaf ears” as people turn away from the truth and believe man-made fables.

Paul was about to finish his course, but Timothy's life and ministry still lay before him. Our task is to find His will and do it as long as we live. This involves watching, enduring, and working. Paul's argument is clear: he is now about to leave the scene, and somebody must take his place. Young people in our churches need to be reminded that they are the future in the church. Paul has no regrets as he faces eternity: he had been a good soldier, a faithful runner, a faithful steward of the treasure of the Gospel. He looked forward to receiving his reward from the Lord.

Read 2 Timothy 4:1-5 and answer the following questions:

When he left the world, Elijah gave his mantle to Elisha to signify that the young man who had served him would now succeed him as Israel's chief prophet. When a tired runner finishes his lap in a relay race, he passes the baton to a fresh runner and then goes on to rest. Paul was not passing his apostolic status to Timothy, but he was passing on his task of guarding and spreading God's truth.

1. What does Paul charge Timothy to do in 4:1-2?
2. What does it mean to "*be ready in and out of season*"?
3. List and define the key words in 4:2.
4. According to verse 2, how should we deal with this problem?
5. Does what Paul describes in 4:3-4 happen today? If so, can you think of some examples?
6. Define the word "Evangelist."

7. What role should evangelists play in dealing with the issues in verses 3-4?

Read 2 Timothy 4:6-8 and answer the following questions:

8. According to 4:6, what future lays ahead for Paul?

9. List 3 action statements Paul used to summarize his life in 4:7.

10. What would it take in your life to say as Paul did, *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”*?

11. What reward awaited Paul? Who else can receive this crown?

12. Which reasons in 4:1-8 most motivate you to serve with joy and endurance?

13. Read 2 Timothy 4:1-8 from the New Living Translation. Note your final thoughts and how to apply them to your life.

I solemnly urge you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus, who will someday judge the living and the dead when he comes to set up his Kingdom: ² Preach the word of God. Be prepared, whether the time is favorable or not. Patiently correct, rebuke, and encourage your people with good teaching. ³ For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their

own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. ⁴ They will reject the truth and chase after myths. ⁵ But you should keep a clear mind in every situation. Don't be afraid of suffering for the Lord. Work at telling others the Good News, and fully carry out the ministry God has given you. ⁶ As for me, my life has already been poured out as an offering to God. The time of my death is near. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful. ⁸ And now the prize awaits me—the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on the day of his return. And the prize is not just for me but for all who eagerly look forward to his appearing. NIV