

2nd Timothy Ch 4:1-2

“A Solemn Charge”

As we approach this final ch in the book of 2nd Timothy, we approach the final ch in Paul the apostle’s life. These would be the last words that he would ever write prior to his execution at the chopping block of Caesar Nero. and Though he’s longing to see Timothy once again before his departure from this world, there’s no way he can be sure that he’ll get that chance. and So there’s a few things that he wants to convey to Timothy that are of radical importance to the ministry that’s been entrusted to him. I mean I don’t know about you, but if I had the opportunity to be at Billy Graham’s bedside during his last moments on this earth, or Chuck Smith happened to call for me knowing that he was about to die. and While I was there at their bedside they grabbed me by the hand and said, “Young man, there’s something you need to know and that you need to tuck deep into your heart, and lead your life accordingly if you’re to fulfill the ministry that God has committed to your trust.” I’d be all ears; I wouldn’t be all, “What was that, I’m sorry I was checking out that picture over there on the wall.” Whatever they said to me I would never forget as long as I lived. I’ve had about 3 conversations with Chuck Smith in my entire life, every one of them lasting under 3 minutes but I remember them fairly vividly and they were about semi-menial things. How much more if he was seeking to give me personal encouragement regarding the call of God on my life?

This is what’s happening here at the close of this book, this giant of a man, Paul the apostle is on death row, he’s penning his final letter to his young protégé, and there’s some things he wants to make sure that are real clear in Timothy’s heart and mind before he goes on to be with the Lord. He’s sort of passing the baton in this the final stretch of his race, and he’s encouraging Timothy to run well, and to finish well, because we all know it’s not near as important how one begins (as critical as that can be) as compared to how one ends. We never read the words “Well begun” in the scriptures, but rather we read “Well done” we’re to finish well. and Paul is imparting the necessary tools to Timothy in order to ensure that he is able to do just that, to finish well. and May God help each and everyone of us, that no matter how we’ve begun, some strong, and some stumbling off the blocks, but that we’re able to get back up and complete the race that we’ve begun and to finish well. Don’t give up now, you’ve come too far, the time is too close, the hour is at hand and Jesus Christ is at the very door, let’s finish well.

As for our outline of ch 4, I want to give you 8 words that will hopefully help us get a handle on this ch to sort of serve as an overview type outline. #1 We find in vs 1-2 the “*Exhortation*” as Paul charges Timothy unto a specific task before God. #2 in Vs 3-4 the “*Inclination*” that substantiates the need for the exhortation, #3 in vs 5 the call to “*Duration*” the encouragement to go the distance, to fulfill your ministry. #4 In vs 6-8 we find Paul there drawing attention to his “*Destination*” as he informs Timothy as to the realization that the time of his departure is at hand.

#5 Vs 9-13, We'll call this "*Isolation*" Paul is virtually all alone; only Luke remains with him everyone else is gone. and Paul wants to see Timothy again, you sort of get a sense of loneliness as you read this portion of the ch regarding Paul's isolation through his imprisonment. #6 Vs 14-15 Paul here speaks of "*Compensation*" not for himself, but rather that the Lord would repay in full this certain man Alexander according to his works and the harm he inflicted on Paul and his ministry. The Lord will be his retaliation; he just commends that circumstance to the Lord. #7 Vs 16-18 the word here is "*Preservation*" all these things have happened to Paul but the Lord has preserved him and will continue to preserve him unto that Day that he has appointed that he should fulfill *his* ministry. and Finally #8 Vs 19-22 here we find Paul's closing "*Salutation*" his greetings and final farewells in this his last letter.

This morning the "Exhortation", let's read (remembering that the ch breaks have been inserted by man and aren't inspired) from vs 16 of ch 3 through vs 2 of ch 4 and I think that it will give us a better sense of the flow of what's happening here. Because about the 4th word into the 1st vs we see that word "Therefore" which will always take us back to something previously stated. "Because of these things, or that which has been previously mentioned this is the way you need to respond." and I find that this word "Therefore" many times serves as a pivoting point whereby a *principal* becomes *practical*. So that there may be this principal that's laid out for us in scripture and after it's established it may be followed up with the word "Therefore" which is often times going to be followed up with practical application, either to the positive or the negative depending on the principal at hand. For example Jesus said, "*The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few;* (that's the principal) *therefore* (now there's a pivot into the practical) *pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.*" Luke 10:2 In 1 Cor 6:19-20 Paul writes there and says, "*Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price;* (That's the principal) *therefore* (now here comes the practical) *glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.*" and It's not always that cut and dry, but often times it is and such is the case here, notice vs 16 of ch 3.

Vs16- 2 of ch 4

In Vs 1 we see this solemn radically sincere charge that Paul adjures or urges Timothy in. and This vs is reminiscent of another vs in which Paul charged Timothy in and we find it in Paul's 1st letter to Timothy and we read there, "*I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality.*" But there's also some differences between these 2 vs in that in 1st Timothy we see God, the Lord Jesus, and the elect angels, and here we're reading of God, and the Lord Jesus Christ with out mention of the elect angels. But as to where in 1st Timothy, Paul names Jesus Christ with out any elaboration, here Paul elaborates upon Jesus Christ bringing into view 3 additional aspects of # 1 Who He is and, #2 His soon return, and #3 His coming Kingdom.

But anytime you see words such as “I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ” you do well to pay close attention to that which follows because it’s impossible that anyone should charge you by anything greater. Whatever is being said and is *about* to be said is of grave importance, so much to the extent that someone (in this case Paul) thought it necessary to bring it to your attention before God Himself. It’s like when you say, “As God as my witness” it just sort of shuts everything down because if you’re willing to call God as your witness knowing Him with whom you have to do and you’re prepared to take that up with Him with the integrity of your heart, then who am I to seek to refute that?

So to with this charge, or this testimony, this command, it’s before God and the Lord Jesus Christ who will judge the living and the dead. and As you know if you’re charged with something in a court of law, it’s a responsibility that’s been laid upon you. “You’re hereby charged for the murder of so and so” that means you’re going to stand responsible for this action and you’re going to serve your life now accordingly by the command of the law. Well, in much the same way as Paul is sort of passing on this baton of ministry to Timothy, he charges him with a certain responsibility in the courtroom of God Himself that by the command of the Word of God (calling God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ as witnesses) he’s to pattern his life and lead his life accordingly, after a certain manner when it comes to his handling of the ministry. Now there are certain things in the ministry that are optional, if want to endorse Gospel for Asia we can, if we don’t want to we won’t. It doesn’t matter what any other ministry is doing in regards to that, it’s an option that we have based upon our convictions before God.

Surely there are many things regarding the ministry that are optional, if I want to marry a couple that another minister refuses to, that’s my option, or if he wants to marry a couple that I’ve refused to, that’s *his* option. But when the Word of God charges me, and charges you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ with a certain protocol, there is no other option, there’s no democracy involved, we can’t reason this thing through, or be open to other ideas; it’s God’s way or the highway and this is one of those areas that we find ourselves in, if we want to be a ministry after God’s own heart then there’s no option with this one. Or for any other group or denomination or organization, affiliation or whatever, the Word of God lays out for us here a specific protocol that cannot be compromised if we’re to stand before God having “fulfilled” (as Paul tells Timothy in vs 5) our ministry.

Now we’ve discussed this word “therefore.” This word “Before” literally translated means “in the face of” or “in the presence of” or “in the sight of.” This charge is in the sight of God, before the very presence of God, it’s a word that would be used to describe a courtroom appearance.

When a person is summoned to court maybe they'd receive a paper that says, "You're hereby summoned to such and such an address to appear *before* the honorable so and so, judge." Or something like that, the point being, you need to make an appearance before, or in the sight of this judge to give testimony and when you give that testimony you'll have the judges full attention. and So you begin to get the flavor of this vs as Paul uses words like, "Charge, and "Before" and "Judge" all that coupled with the fact that he's preparing to stand before Jesus Christ and so he's bringing Timothy into that same reality. Regarding this "courtroom" of life, and he's saying, "Timothy, every time you give testimony as unto the Lord, anytime you share His word, or give a study, or witness to a buddy, you have God's full attention. He's listening to every word you say as you stand there on His behalf as to whether or not you represent and reflect Him accurately, and you need to bear in mind that He's going to judge the living and the dead at His appearing." Jesus said, "*I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.*" Matt 12:36 and So there's this sincerity and sobriety that permeates this vs that says to you and me, "Take the call that God has placed upon your life, and the responsibility that He has entrusted to you seriously." Because God has appointed a day that He will judge the earth in righteousness and the bible is clear that judgment begins in the House of God.

I'm not seeking to lay a trip on anyone, yet at the same time I believe that we would *all* do well to occasionally reflect on the fact that one day we're going to stand before God, and our works are going to be judged. Now if you know the Lord, you won't be judged in the sense of what's to be done regarding the penalty of your sin, that was taken care of at the cross, Jesus bore that judgment. But you're works, what you did with the gift that God has given you, the way you've led your life in Christ will be weighed in the balance. You see the enemy wants to sort of just lull us into lethargy, and a sort of slothfulness about our service towards the Lord. But we need to be sober about the fact that we're going to give an account before God one day concerning those things and opportunities that He's committed to our trust. and Good reality check on these things helps us in a few ways. #1 It encourages us to do that which we've been called to do diligently, faithfully and carefully. #2 It also gives a sense of liberation from the fear of man, Prov 29:25 says, "*The fear of man brings a snare, But whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe.*" So if we bear in mind that God is ultimately the only judge with whom we have to do, then what can man do to me? Destroy my body? So what (not that anyone looks forward to that), but I fear Him who has the power to destroy my soul.

Then finally knowing that one day the Lord's going to judge our works gives us a measure of endurance that goes beyond where our natural tendencies would leave us. It carries us through those difficult days and motivates us to remain faithful, because we're serving the Lord, not ourselves.

This phrase "Who will judge" could've also been rendered "Who is *about* to judge." What can I say, Jesus is coming soon. James said, "*Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!*" James 5:9 Jesus Himself said, "*Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.*" Rev 3:11

Again, “*And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.*” Rev 22:12 This is why the bible issues a warning against saying in your heart, “My master is delaying His coming.” Because it produces that sense of lethargy, and apathy, and you begin to do things that you know aren’t really approved of by the Lord but you think you’ll always have time to repent and get right. and Jesus said, “*The master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.*” Luke 12:4 Why, because the Lord is coming soon, and so the servant who says in his heart that the Lord is delaying His coming will be caught off guard and unprepared. Unprepared for what? For the judgment that will come upon the living and the dead at the Lord’s appearing.

Now the bible speaks of 3 distinct judgments that will take place. Again for the believer the judgment of your sin is a done deal. 1st of all there is the judgment that is exclusive to believers known as the “bema” seat or “judgment” seat of Christ before which we all (as believers) will appear. In 1st Cor Ch 3 we read, “*Now if anyone builds on this foundation (that is the foundation of Christ) with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*” 1 Cor 3:12-15 and Then Paul wrote to them again and said, “*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*” 2 Cor 5:10 and So all of us as believers will stand before the Lord in judgment, not in regards to salvation, but in regards to service. and Those things we’ve done from a right heart and a pure motive before the Lord for His glory and not our own will endure, those things that we did out of guilt, or constraint, or to be seen of man will incinerate.

Then there’s also the judgment that we might refer as the judgment of the nations, as you know Rev 1:7 says, “Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.” and According to Matthews gospel the 1st business that Jesus is going to tend to upon His coming again to the earth is to divide the nations into 2 groups; those who endured the Great Tribulation with out giving in to the pressures of Anti-Christ and the world system out of their love and commitment to Jesus Christ, and those who felt it easier to go with the flow, or were just flat out against any and all things godly and served and worshiped the A.C. rather than Jesus Christ and We read in Matt 25 “*When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'*” Matt 25:31-34

To the unrighteous we read where He will say, *“Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’”* Matt 25:41 Then He will begin His rule and reign upon the earth for 1,000yrs (that period known as the millennial reign or Kingdom of Christ.) Then the final judgment that deals with Jesus and humanity is after that 1,000yr millennial reign and it’s known as the White throne judgment when that final judgment is placed upon every non-believer and they are sentenced their place in the lake of fire from which the smoke of their torment shall ascend forever and ever and they shall have no rest day or night. Rev 20:11-15 says, *“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.”* Jesus Christ is going to judge the living and the dead at His appearing. Jesus said, *“The Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son.”* John 5:22

Man how this should motivate the believer, because the bible says that God is, *“..not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”* 2 Peter 3:9 But as a general rule people don’t just one day place their faith in Jesus Christ The bible says that, *“Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* Rom 10:17 and So that’s where Paul is leading Timothy here, since all scripture is inspired by God and it’s profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, the charge is given before God knowing that Jesus Christ is going to judge the living and the dead, and bring every idle word into account, don’t preach idle words, preach *God’s Word*. (Notice Vs2 read)

We’re just going to touch on this and then continue from this point this time, I wanted to focus primarily on the sincerity of the charge this time, and then we’ll consider the charge and the reason for it next time.

But if we’re to have a life and a ministry that is after God’s own heart, then it has to be about God’s own word. One individual put it like this, *“We are not to preach sociology, but salvation; not economics but evangelism; not reform, but redemption; not culture, but conversion; not progress, but pardon; not a new social order, but a new birth; not revolution; but regeneration; not renovation but revival; not resuscitation, but resurrection; not a new organization, but a new creation; not democracy, but the Gospel; not civilization, but Christ, we are ambassadors, not diplomats.”* Hugh Thomsen Kerr.

We're to preach the Word, not man's psychology, or philosophy, but the Word of God. Man's word has absolutely no power, no propensity to change the human heart, they may pull on some heart *strings* and persuade people emotionally. But only God's Word converts the soul, giving faith to the listener to believe upon Jesus Christ. This point can't be stressed enough, it's only the Word of God that cuts into the deep recesses of the heart and lays the human heart out/exposed before God in the sinful condition in which it's in. It's only in the light of the Word of God that I'm able to see myself as a sinner and in need of a Savior. The bible tells us, "*For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.*" Heb 4:12-13

The word of God has the ability to take those deep things of the human heart that we would to God no one would ever know because we're so ashamed of them, and lay them out before God as they are and leave us exposed and undone before the Lord. and Once we're there before Him, no longer making excuses or trying to hide our sin comes those words, "*Come now, and let us reason together, Says the LORD, Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.*" Isa 1:18 and The goodness of God draws us to repentance, but you see, "*How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"*" Rom 10:14-15

Of what good things, the good things of the Word of God, preach the Word, at any chance you get, don't throw in your opinions, utilize and employ the word of God anytime you get a chance, preach the word, a solemn charge. Next time we'll further explore this vs.

You see it's only in the Word of God that we learn of the righteousness of God, and the sinfulness of man, that we learn that we've all sinned and fall short of God's glory. It's in the word of God that we come to the realization that none of us can get to Heaven by being basically good people because there's no such thing as "basically good" there's only one that's good, and that is God. As far as mankind is concerned "There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one." Rom 3:10-12

We've all blown it, we've all said something, or done something, or thought something that we never should have and there's a gap between us and God. But it's also in the word of God that we learn of the fact that God loves us so much that He was willing to become one of us in the person of Jesus Christ in order that He might lay down His life for us and make atonement for our sin. It's the word that teaches us that God demonstrated His love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

It's the bible that tells us that today is the day of salvation, today if you will hear His voice don't harden your heart. Jesus said, Behold I stand at the door and knock, and if any one hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in. God loves you so much, it doesn't matter where you've been, what you've done, how old you are, how young you are, if you're willing to come to Christ, He's willing to receive you. and He'll cast your sin as far as the east is from the west and make you a new creation, and He'll fill that void and that emptiness that's in your heart. But He won't force you to come to Him, that part is up to you.