

2 Timothy 4

“Paul gave his final charge to Timothy about faithfulness and ministry. Then, as he looked toward his own impending death, he summarized his life goal and purpose, concluding with thanks to others who partnered with him in his ministry and a personal request for Timothy.” (Holman New Testament Commentary)

Read verses 1 – 5

1. In verse 1, Paul says that he gives this charge to Timothy before God and Jesus. Paul doesn't take this charge lightly and neither should Timothy. He says that this is the same God and Jesus that will judge the living and the dead during the End Times. So if Paul is in error, he will be judged ever so severely whether he is alive or dead. Guzik says that the charge that Paul is giving Timothy is also his “testimony”. It is Paul swearing before God and Jesus in Old Testament proportions that it is what he has taught Timothy and now send him out into ministry is true including the Gospel that Paul has taught.
2. In verse 2, Paul states what he expects Timothy to do. Paul tells Timothy to “Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season”. Even though Paul has given Timothy the tools on how to keep a church running smoothly, Paul says “*preach the word*”. Timothy's number 1 objective is to tell others corporately and individually about salvation through Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God which is Grace through Faith.
3. Secondly, as a pastor of a church, Timothy's responsibility is to “*Correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.*” He doesn't say it but it is implied, as Jesus said “*I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble.*” (John 16:33a) When you have people involved in running things, there will be trouble. Paul says take care of the trouble but when you do, fix it with “*great patience and careful instruction, with love.*” I have experienced people trying to fix things with a “bull in a China shop” mentality and it does not work. Feelings get hurt and it causes trouble in the church.

4. Continuing in verse 3, Paul says that a time is coming when people will not accept “sound doctrine”. Instead of changing their lives to accept and live the true Gospel, they will call pastors that teach what they want to hear. People will say that the Bible is just an old book and is not applicable for today. They will pick and choose what they want to believe. Some of this type of thinking has happened throughout history.
5. They will and do teach things like “If I am a good person, then I will be allowed into Heaven.” Or “Replacement theology” which says “The church has replaced the Jews as God’s chosen people.” You can see this in numerous cults that alter the gospel message based on other people who claim to have had visions which change the true Gospel which Paul taught, like the Mormons, Jehovah Witness and Seventh Day Adventists.
6. In verse 5, Paul tells Timothy that he has one thing to do, preach and teach the true Gospel message. Evangelize, but while you do that be a good example of Christian living by keeping your cool in all situations and “*endure hardship*” as Paul did. When we studied Paul’s letters to the Corinthian church, we read that Paul said, “*I have the right to do anything,*” *you say—but not everything is beneficial.*” (1 Corinthians 6:12) There is such a thing as “dead right”.
7. Paul tells Timothy to “*discharge all duties of your ministries*”. What Paul is telling Timothy is above all else teach the Word of God and grace through faith. Don’t get caught up in running the church. Sometimes we get so caught up with making everything in a worship service run smoothly that no one gets fed the word of God. We spend too much time with the church programming that we forget to worship. I often warn Zack to make sure that he is taking time to worship even though he is flipping slides.

Read verses 6 – 8

8. **In** verse 6, Paul tells Timothy that his time on earth is nearly through. He has given God his entire life. From his childhood, Paul was raised to serve God as a Pharisee in the Sanhedrin. Then he met Jesus on the Damascus Road. He served Jesus from that time on, risking death at every turn. Paul was essentially passing the torch to Timothy.

“There was also a Roman idea here. Every Roman meal ended with a small sacrificial ritual to the gods — a cup of wine was taken and poured out before the gods. In this sense Paul said “The day is done, the meal is just about over, and I’m being poured out unto God.” (Guzik)

9. Paul says in verse 7 that he has done everything that he could to reach the Gentiles with the message of salvation through faith in Jesus. He uses two metaphors here to point to “*keeping the faith*”. “*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race.*”
10. In verse 8, Paul says that there is a “crown of righteousness” waiting for him in Heaven. This crown is one of the five crowns in Heaven. Dr. David Jeremiah in his book, “What Every Christian Should Know” says that the five crowns of Heaven are:
 - The Incorruptible Crown (1 Corinthians 9:24-25): Awarded for self-discipline, controlling the flesh, and living a dedicated Christian life.
 - The Crown of Rejoicing (1 Thessalonians 2:19, Philippians 4:1): Also known as the "soul-winner's crown," this is for sharing the gospel and leading others to Christ.
 - The Crown of Righteousness (2 Timothy 4:8): Promised to those who love and anticipate the second coming of Jesus Christ.
 - The Crown of Life (James 1:12, Revelation 2:10): Given to those who endure persecution, trials, and temptation faithfully, even unto martyrdom.
 - The Crown of Glory (1 Peter 5:4): Awarded to pastors, elders, and spiritual leaders who faithfully shepherd and shepherd God’s people.

GotQuestions.com says, “We inherit this crown through the righteousness of Christ which is what gives us a right to it, and without which it cannot be obtained. Because it is obtained and possessed in a righteous way, and not by force and deceit as earthly crowns sometimes are, it is an everlasting crown, promised to all who love the Lord and eagerly wait for His return. Through our enduring discouragements, persecutions, sufferings, or even death, we know assuredly our reward is with Christ in eternity (Philippians 3:20). This crown is not for those who depend upon their own sense of righteousness or of their own works. Such an

attitude breeds only arrogance and pride, not a longing, a fervent desire to be with the Lord.”

Read verses 9 – 13

11. In the next few verses, Paul adds some personal information into the letter. He knew that he was not long for this world. It seems that Paul wanted one last opportunity to say “Goodbye” to Timothy.
12. Paul also uses these verses to fill Timothy in on where his coworkers in Christ have gone at this point. Paul says that “*Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia.*” “*12 I sent Tychicus to Ephesus.*” He says that Luke is the only one currently with him.
13. He says the Demas went to Thessalonica but he didn’t leave to do ministry, Paul says, “*Demas has deserted me, because he loved this world.*” Obviously, it was not a favorable departure for Demas. Demas did not go to Thessalonica to reach people for Jesus. Have you ever asked yourself if you could have endured what Paul endured?
14. In verses 11 and 13, Paul gives Timothy a couple of assignments. First, he tells Timothy to stop and get Mark. Mark or John Mark was a cousin of Barnabas and the writer of the Gospel of Mark. He travels with Paul and Barnabas on Paul’s first missionary journey. Paul and Mark had a disagreement and they parted ways (Acts 13). Based on verse 11, they must have reconciled because Paul says that “*he is helpful to me in my ministry*”.
15. In verse 13, Paul has Timothy stop in Troas and pick up a cloak and his scrolls.

Read verses 14 – 15

16. In these verses, Paul calls out a man named Alexander. He specifies that Alexander is a metalworker that opposed the Gospel message. Based on what happened when Paul visited Ephesus the first time, Alexander’s opposition was based on the financial aspect of the idols. During Paul’s first visit to Ephesus, he caused a riot of people, specifically metalworkers that made idols or metal

figures of the Goddess Diana. It wasn't based on religion or idolatry, but it was based on earnings or sales of the metal figurines.

17. Regardless of who Alexander the metalworker was and what harm he caused Paul, he leaves Alexander's punishment to God. Paul repeats what he wrote in Romans 12:19 which came from Deuteronomy 32:35. *"Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord."*

Read verses 16 – 18

18. Paul shifts topics. He transitions to his first trial. He says that he was alone to defend himself at his first trial. This trial was probably the preliminary trial written about at the end of Acts. Jesus was the only one there to help him endure, just as the disciples abandoned Jesus, Paul's helpers had abandoned him.
19. Paul forgave them for the abandonment. Through it all Paul says that Jesus was with him. As the writer of Hebrews (13:5) repeating Deuteronomy 31:6, 8 *"I will never leave you nor forsake you."* Just as Acts 1:8 says, *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witness"*. This is the power that Paul is writing about in these verses.
20. Paul did not just defend himself, he took advantage of this opportunity to share the good news of Jesus Christ with everyone that could hear him. He shared his testimony just as he did to the crowd in Jerusalem (Acts 22), before Governor Felix and Festus (Acts 24–25), and his persuasive testimony before King Agrippa II (Acts 26).
21. Do you realize that Paul shared the Gospel message as his defense knowing full well that his life was in the balance. He was willing to do so for the sake of those hearing his message, as well as those throughout history that have read and studied this letter. Similar to the Easter message, Jesus was willing to die so that we can have salvation. We can read this letter and know that Jesus walks beside us even today and gives us the strength to share the good news of Jesus Christ regardless of the consequences.

22. As Paul says, “*He will save us from the lion’s mouth.*” In verse 18, Paul states that Jesus will be with him and give him strength to share the Gospel message to the Gentile or to take him up to Heaven, pretty much regardless of the consequences here on Earth and he gives all glory to Jesus for doing so.
23. In 1 Peter 5:8, Peter called Satan a lion seeking to devour Christians. This could have been the lion that Paul was talking about or it could have been Nero who was the lion that Paul faced.
24. In verse 18, Paul says that Jesus will protect him regardless of what he faces. Do we believe as Paul did? Do we trust in Jesus to protect us and be with us no matter what we face in life? Do we rely on our own strength or do we call on the unlimited power of Jesus? I have said numerous times that I don’t know how a non-believer gets through the loss of a loved one without Jesus. As the poem, “Footprints in the Sand” says that during the worst times Jesus carried us.
25. Before Jesus was arrested and taken to be crucified, He prayed, “*Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.*” (John 17:1) This is what Paul is talking about. He is saying, “God give me the strength to go through my coming ordeal glorifying you.”

Read verses 19 – 22

26. He ends this letter by sending greetings to those serving God and updating Timothy on where the others are located at this specific time. Guzik points out that Paul states that he “*left Trophimus sick in Miletus.*” Paul did many miraculous healings but he couldn’t heal Trophimus. Charles Spurgeon wrote an entire sermon on this statement. He made points of: Sometimes it is God’s will to be in sick; Good men may be laid aside when they are needed most; and Good men will want the Lord’s work to go on, even when they can’t be a part of it.

27. Then he tells Timothy to get there before winter. Traveling in that region in the winter was bad. The Mediterranean Sea was treacherous in the winter. It is also possible that Paul knew when his final trial would be.

“Paul was martyred in the aftermath of the great fires that swept Rome in A.D. 64 — which Nero, in some manner, tried to blame on Christians. According to some traditions, he was beheaded on the same day Peter was crucified upside-down. Paul was a Roman citizen and could not be legally crucified.” (Guzik)

28. In verse 22, Paul sends a final blessing to Timothy. “*The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you all.*”