

THE CHARGE

A STUDY IN 2 TIMOTHY

Week 8, Day 1 - 2 Timothy 4:1-2

TEXT –

I 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: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

INTRODUCTION –

It's Summer Break and Mom has gone to work and left a list on the kitchen counter. The note reads, "Put the clean dishes away, fold and put away your laundry, pull weeds from the garden, take the chicken out of the freezer at 2." She's not at home, but she trusts that these things will be done by the time she gets back. We have been "charged" with completing these tasks. If we look at every item, we can see how these tasks will positively impact our own lives as well as the lives of our family. These aren't empty tasks with no point; Mom knows what needs to be done and has entrusted us to be a helpful part of the family.

In this letter to Timothy, a young man who is leading in the church, he has received a "charge" of his own. This charge holds more weight than a list on the kitchen counter; it is backed by the name of Christ Jesus, God Himself, and we have been tasked with carrying His Gospel out to the world, teaching them of what Jesus has done. The tasks are as follows:

- Preach the Word
- Be ready in season and out of season
- Reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching

Reprove – "to correct usually gently or with kindly intent"

Rebuke – "express sharp disapproval or criticism"

Exhort – "urge strongly; to give warnings or advice"

Each of these tasks have common elements: the need to know our Bible well and the responsibility of sharing what we know to others. This list has been "left behind on the kitchen counter" for us and we have been entrusted by Jesus to complete it before He returns. This doesn't mean we have to be the smartest person in the room, or the loudest, the most popular, or that we aren't allowed to feel a little intimidated. It merely means that we have an opportunity to be obedient to what Jesus has charged us with: sharing the Gospel.

This can seem like an intimidating task! Our minds start to race “What if I don’t know what to say? I’m still learning, but I feel like I don’t know enough. What if I say the wrong thing?” When this happens, we remember that Jesus did not leave us alone, but He gives us the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit is alive! He is the one who helps us understand Scripture, who can guide our words and our actions. As we grow and get better over time, the Spirit is with us every step of the way. Every verse we read, and every word spoken to teach others about His word is a step into further obedience. Carrying the Gospel out to the world seems too big, until we remember that this means being obedient *today* to the things in front of us *today*. When we are equipped with His Word, we become ready for anything that comes our way. We are able to preach the Word, reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

QUESTIONS:

Q1 - What has God “charged” us to do? (Hint: Read Matthew 28:19-20)

Q2 - Why is it important to know the Bible well?

Q3 - What does it mean to “be ready in season and out of season”?

APPLICATION/ACTION -

It’s easy to think that sharing the Gospel or preaching are things for the people who stand up with microphones at church, but not for us. 2 Timothy tells us that this isn’t true! Even we have been charged to preach the Word. But that means we need to know the Word. Write down one thing you have learned, thought about differently, or were reminded of from the Bible this week. Think of someone that you can tell that thing to and commit to telling them. If you’re stuck with how to tell them, try: “I learned something about God this week... What do you think about that?”

PRAYER -

God, thank you for the Bible. I want to know you and your Word better. Thank you for the Holy Spirit who guides me and my mind to understand your Word. Help me to remember the things I learn in the Bible. Give me courage to talk about them openly. Give me wisdom to know how to answer questions about you to my friends and family. Thank you for being with me always as I grow in obedience. Amen.

Worship

THIS WEEK, CONSIDER LISTENING TO:

King of Kings by Brooke Ligertwood and Hillsong Worship

THE CHARGE

A STUDY IN 2 TIMOTHY

Week 8, Day 2 - 2 Timothy 4:3-5

TEXT –

For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

INTRODUCTION –

There is this thing in the world called “confirmation bias”. It means that people are on the lookout for things that confirm what they already think. Here is an example: If we think that our brother is not nice, we are more likely to notice the irritating things he does than we are to notice the nice things he does. When he uses up the last of the shampoo and knows we were going to shower next, it is confirmed: brother = not nice. When he plays the movie that he wants to watch instead of the one we wanted to watch: brother = not nice. Enough of these little pieces of “evidence” build up in our minds until it feels absolutely true: our brother is NOT nice. When we operate with a confirmation bias, we are solidifying the ideas we already have until they feel more and more like truth.

This also makes us blind and less receptive to the actual truth. We don’t notice that brother saved the last cookie in the batch for us. We don’t notice that our brother helped us with our homework. We don’t notice that our brother cleaned our dishes for us after dinner. We already think he’s not nice and we’re going to keep believing it. So, when someone tells us, “Your brother is nice!”, it feels like a lie and we turn away from it.

Everyone does this to some extent, some worse than others. This Scripture in 2 Timothy warns us about people who operate in this way regarding the Bible and describes them as “having itching ears”. Instead of learning truth about God, they look for people to confirm the things they already believe, based on nothing but their own thoughts and experiences. It says in verses 3 and 4, “they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.” The warning is this: most people are more worried about being right than they are about knowing the truth.

Paul has just finished telling Timothy in verses 1 and 2 that He is supposed to preach the Word and tell people the truth. He doesn't want Timothy to get discouraged when he goes out to teach, so Paul is warning him ahead of time, "Not everyone is going to want to listen." They will gather up "evidence" that proves what they already think. Paul says this in another way in Romans 1:25, "They exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever!"

This is more than just a warning about the people receiving the preaching though, it is a warning to Timothy himself as well. There are going to be times when he will feel like wandering off into myths too! So, he gives this advice:

- "Always be sober-minded".
Translation: keep your head on straight and don't let these myths and false gods hold any sway with you.
- "Endure suffering".
Translation: it's not going to feel good when people reject your teaching. They might even get mad at you or want to hurt you. Push through; God is with you always.
- "Do the work of an evangelist".
Translation: people *need* to hear the Gospel. They are lost and are sinners who are lost in their sin and have the exact same need that you do: a Savior. Keep telling them about Jesus; don't stop.
- "Fulfill your ministry".
Translation: God has a specific plan for *you*. He has laid out a ministry for you to complete and knows you can do it with the power of the Gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit.

QUESTIONS:

Q1 - Can you think of a time that you thought something was true, but you were proven wrong?

Q2 - Have you ever had "itching ears", looking for the things you want to hear instead of the truth?

Q3 - Would you rather know the truth or be right?

Q4 - Which of the four pieces of advice that Timothy is given in verse 5 is hardest for you? Why?

APPLICATION/ACTION -

God's truth is always bigger, better, and truer than the lies we believe. Write down the lies that you believe about yourself or the world. Use your Bible and the internet to find a Scripture that tells you God's truth about that lie.

Lie	God's Truth
Example: God doesn't care about me.	Example: John 3:16 – For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

PRAYER -

God, thank you for the truth that you have given us in your Word. Thank you for loving us enough to show us the way. God, help me to not have “itching ears” and wander off into myths. Help me to keep my mind on you. Give me strength to carry on when I struggle. Give me courage to tell people about you. I know you have a plan for my life and I want to walk in it. Amen.

Worship

THIS WEEK, CONSIDER LISTENING TO:

Reign in Us by Starfield

THE CHARGE

A STUDY IN 2 TIMOTHY

Week 8, Day 3 - 2 Timothy 4:6-8

TEXT –

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

INTRODUCTION –

In the Jewish sacrificial system, a sacrifice wasn't complete unless there was a drink offering (wine) to accompany it. When Paul says he is "being poured out as a drink offering", he means that he knows the end of his ministry on earth is coming. This letter to Timothy is written in the light of this, knowing he will be leaving, and it is Timothy's turn to carry the torch of the Gospel forward to new generations.

As he reaches the end of his ministry, Paul looks forward to the rewards that have been promised to him by God for serving Him faithfully. He knows he has been obedient to what Jesus has asked him to do: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." This is a bold statement! It would be hard for many of us to say those words with confidence. This doesn't mean that Paul lived a perfect life. In fact, far from it. Before Paul met Jesus, he was most well-known for killing Christians! But Paul's heart was transformed when he encountered the Living God! Paul doesn't say these things because he is proud of himself and is trying to brag, but because he wants the Gospel to outlive him.

The whole reason Paul has written this letter to Timothy is for the Gospel to continue through the generations. Timothy isn't promised an easy ride. This is a fight to be fought and a race to be finished. Just like Timothy can learn this truth from Paul, we can learn this truth from the Christians who have come before us. We can know Jesus now because of the 2000-year-long line of people who "fought the good fight", "finished the race", and "kept the faith" in their own little corners of history.

Paul ends this Scripture with encouraging himself and Timothy with what is awaiting them in heaven should they endure through this trial of life. When we are saved by Jesus, we inherit His righteousness and are crowned with His glory. We are not judged on the basis of our sin (which is great, just like Paul's), but on the merit of a sinless Jesus who died on our behalf. This gives us immense hope! Our mind will try to convince us that the shame of being rejected is big enough to keep us from sharing the Gospel. Shut it down! Any rejection we endure on behalf of the Gospel will pale in comparison to the crown or

righteousness that is laid up for us in heaven. We have the privilege of standing in the long line of saints that have gone before us and passing the torch of the Gospel through the years.

QUESTIONS:

Q1 - Who was the first person who introduced you to Jesus? What was that like?

Q2 - What do you think your “fight” or “race” might look like in your life? What difficulties might get in the way of you following God and sharing the Gospel?

Q3 - When the race of your life is finished, what do you want to be known for?

APPLICATION/ACTION -

Who is one person that you would like to see know Jesus? Write their name on a notecard or a note on your phone, anywhere that you will be able to see often. Commit to praying for them daily. Pray that their eyes would be opened to the truth. Pray that you would get the opportunity to tell them about Jesus.

PRAYER -

God, thank you for your grace to me! Thank you for what Jesus did when he died in my place. Thank you for defeating death and giving me an opportunity to know you personally. God, I know you have a plan for my life. Help me to be obedient to follow your will. Give me strength to fight the fight and endurance to run the race. Thank you for being with me always. Amen.

Worship

THIS WEEK, CONSIDER LISTENING TO:

No One Ever Cared for Me Like Jesus by Steffany Gretzinger