

**Letters From My Father**  
**Week 31**  
**2 Timothy 4:1-5**  
**“The Heralds and The Heretics”**

**Introduction**

**Will not God grant justice to His elect who cry out to Him day and night? Will He delay in helping them? I tell you that He will swiftly grant them justice. Nevertheless, when The Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth. Luke 18:7-8**

I recently heard a popular entertainer making the case for his wanton lifestyle in an interview. His quote (and I'm paraphrasing here) was something along the lines of, "Jesus didn't like the religious people of his day. He preferred to hang out with the drunkards and the hookers. Those were His kind of people." I do not even know where to begin to point out the flaws in this so-called "logic". First of all, while it is true that Christ spent much of His time shunning the self-righteous and reaching out to the sinful of that generation, to say that people who sin are "his kind of people" is not only ridiculous, but blasphemous as well. The holiness of God does not compromise with sinfulness.

Jesus spent time with sinners in order to call them to repentance, not to endorse their sinful behavior. Do you remember what He said to the woman caught in adultery, you know the one that the self-righteous Pharisees wanted to stone to death? He said to her these words:

**Go, and from now on, do not sin anymore. John 8:11b**

Now I don't know about you, but that doesn't sound like an endorsement of her sinful lifestyle to me. Jesus does indeed love sinners, but He despises sin. And in order to follow Him, we must forsake our sinful ways and obey His commandments. To love Christ is to obey Christ (**John 14:15**). But sadly, many these days want to completely abandon the Biblical teachings of repentance and focus solely on God's love. When you come to know someone, you cannot simply deny portions of their character and focus solely on the things that you like. When we accept someone, we accept them as a whole. Christ cannot be separated from His holiness, no matter how hard we try to remake Him into a person of our own choosing. God is holy, just, and loving, and as such, He cannot possibly condone sin. He simply cannot.

But therein is what makes the gospel message such "*good news*": Because God is holy, just, AND loving, He provided a way for sinners to be forgiven, by offering up His One and Only Son on the cross to pay the penalty for our sin. So now, if we place our faith in Christ, and repent (turn away from) of our sin, we can have forgiveness and everlasting life! The two things go hand in hand; faith and repentance. When we try and separate the two, we are left with an incomplete gospel message.

Many these days, in order to make the gospel "*more palatable*", have chosen to preach only of God's love and avoid such offensive topics such as sin, repentance, and holiness. One such effort which is shown on television a lot these days is the "*Jesus, he gets us*" movement. It, the same as many others, speaks of God's love and compassion, while completely denying His holiness and abhorrence of sin. To watch these ads on TV you would get a sense (if you know nothing of Scripture) that God is just fine with us the way we are, and we just need to embrace His love. While I'm quite certain that this appeals to the sinner, who has no desire to repent, it will not lead him to saving faith. It is a counterfeit offer, and as such offers usually are, it is based upon a false hope.

The Apostle Paul warned Timothy, his young protege, of just such false teachings that would lure the unsuspecting away from true saving faith. As his life was nearing an end and he awaited his appointment with the executioners axe, he desperately wanted to make sure that Timothy stayed the course of faith and would not allow it to be corrupted by those who would do Satan's bidding. It is with some degree of sadness that we read Paul's last known words to the young man whom he cherished so dearly. For we know that not only was Paul beheaded for his faith shortly after writing this letter, but we also see his prophecy in regard to the apostate church of the future being fulfilled before our very eyes.

So, let us look together at this final chapter of *2 Timothy*, as Paul describes those who are called to be Heralds of the gospel, in an age where Heretics abound. And just as Paul would soon be called to

his heavenly reward, we too, who finish this race of faith, are promised to be rewarded for our efforts. The struggle is real, but God is in control. And His people will be granted justice, at the proper time.

### **The Heralds (vs. 1-2)**

***I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus, Who is going to judge the living and the dead, and because of His appearing and His kingdom: Preach The Word; be ready in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, and encourage with great patience and teaching.*** **2 Timothy 4:1-2**

Knowing what the future held for Timothy and all those who would live a godly life in Christ Jesus, Paul charged his young son in the faith to stay the course. His charge to him has wording that is very similar to the swearing before a judge or magistrate in Paul's day. The word he used translated "before" (in the CSB) actually is a compound word that has the Greek word for "eye" at its core. Paul was, therefore, charging Timothy with his ministerial duties in the *sight* of God, even Christ (better rendering) Who will judge the living and the dead. It is as if Paul is saying, do this right Timothy for Christ Himself is watching you and will hold you accountable. How much better would our Christian walk be today, if we considered it with such gravity? Christ is indeed watching us. He knows our hearts, our motives, and our weaknesses, and He knows for certain whether we are giving our all for His glory.

When it comes to judgment, God The Father has deferred such matters to His Son, for Christ has earned the right to judge this world.

***The Father, in fact, judges no one but has given judgment to His Son, so that all people may honor The Son just as they honor The Father. Anyone who does not honor The Son does not honor The Father Who sent Him.*** **John 5:22-23**

There are three separate judgments that The Son of God will perform according to the Scriptures. First, He will judge the Believers at the "bema" or judgement seat of Christ in order to determine our works whether good or bad (**2 Corinthians 5:10**). This judgment of The Church will occur shortly after the rapture, when every Believer will be called upon to give an account of how they have used their spiritual gifts to benefit the kingdom.

The second judgment that The Scriptures speak of is the separation of the "sheep and goats," when Christ Himself will expose the false believers who do not belong to Him (**Matthew 25:31-46**). And of course the third and final judgment is The Great White Throne Judgment mentioned in **Revelation Chapter 20:11-15**, where sinners are judged and forever condemned to the lake of fire known as the "second death". It is in light of these judgements that Paul swears Timothy in, before the Judge of the universe. It is a solemn charge indeed.

When Christ returns for His Bride, The Church, all will stand and face one manner of judgement or the other. Therefore, it is best that we are prepared for that glorious day of His appearing (*epiphaneia* in The Greek), and at the end of The Tribulation, He will descend to establish His kingdom to reign upon the earth. No one who remains in their sins will enter into that kingdom. So again, it is imperative that we are ready when He comes.

After the "swearing in" before The One Who will ultimately judge one and all, Paul commended Timothy to "Preach The Word". The word he used for "preach" is *kerysso* in the Greek (pronounced kay-roos'-so), and it means quite literally to be a "herald". In those days, heralds were sent out by kings or Caesar to announce royal proclamations to the people. Timothy was to be a herald for Christ, to proclaim His message to those who would hear it. This is the charge to every called preacher of God, to proclaim God's message; God's Word to the people.

Notice that Paul didn't charge Timothy to be a herald proclaiming "about" The Word, nor did he command him to proclaim "out of" The Word, but rather, he admonished Him before Christ to simply proclaim *The Word*. So many so-called preachers today will take a verse out of Scripture and use it to back up their own personal opinion. This is not preaching. It is using God's Word for personal edification. A true man of God will teach The Word in its entirety, expositional preaching, so that God's Word may be heard, learned, understood, and obeyed.

Everyone has an opinion, but in the end, it is only The LORD'S opinion that matters. And Timothy was charged to give God's Word to the people, in season or out of season, which in the Greek text simply means whether it be convenient or not. God's people are to boldly proclaim the Word of God, even when it isn't popular, even if it costs us everything. This is not the time for cowardice, as Paul said in this final letter to Timothy (**2 Timothy 1:7**), but it is a time to boldly stand and proclaim the truth, whether people wish to hear it or not. That is what a herald does. He stands and proclaims the king's message. No one needs to hear the herald's personal opinions, but rather, he has been sent to speak the words of the King. And sometimes, those words aren't comforting, but they are necessary none the less.

Paul instructed Timothy to use God's Word to correct, rebuke, and encourage (Greek: *elencho*, *epitimao*, and *parakaleo*, respectively). The first two words are related, both are intended to bring conviction; while the first, *elencho*, speaks primarily to the exposure of sin, and the second *epitimao* is more directed to the exposure of the sinner. A perfect example of this can be found when Nathan confronts King David over his multiple sins with Bathsheba (**2 Samuel 12**). First Nathan described the sin of "someone" and caused David to react to the wickedness of this behavior. Then Nathan turned the tables on David and charged him directly with the very same sin. This is *elencho* (exposing sin) and *epitimao* (exposing the sinner). And these things are essential to any effective preaching. To avoid the topic of sin, deeming it "too confrontational" and simply focusing on God's love, is to undermine the effectiveness of God's Word. God loves us so much that He desires that we forsake the sin that is killing us. This is the message the world needs to hear and embrace!

*Parakaleo* is a word that means literally "to call to one's side". It is a coaching term. We as Christians are called to take people aside and use God's Word to help them gain a better, fuller, richer, and more meaningful life. We are to be "life coaches" as it were, using God's Word as the rulebook for living. No-one has ever improved by being told that they are fine just as they are. God's Word is effective in changing our hearts, so that we can become what He intends for us to be. The Spirit of God is the ultimate *Paraclete*, Who comes alongside us and coaches us with God's Word, changing us from the inside out to conform us into the image of Christ. So, we are to be led by Him as we patiently endeavor to coach others onto the right path. We live to be peacemakers (**Matthew 5:9**), reconciling lost souls to the One Who died to save them. This is our charge, in the sight of Christ our ultimate judge. We are His heralds, proclaiming His truth to a lost and dying world.

### **The Heretics (vs. 3-5)**

***For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, will multiply teachers for themselves because they have an itch to hear what they want to hear. They will turn away from hearing the truth and will turn aside to myths. But as for you, exercise self-control in everything, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. 2 Timothy 4:3-5***

In spite of God's Word being completely accurate and true, many still resist its message. For you see, the self-consumed of this world do not like to hear of their shortcomings. Especially today. We live in a generation that longs to be affirmed in their sin, rather than convicted by it. So, in these last days before the appearing of The LORD Jesus, we see many who have rejected truth tellers in favor of those who proffer appeasement, rather than judgment; self help, as opposed to self sacrifice. As one famous preacher described it, "If the world longs for a golden calf to be worshipped, a calf-maker will be readily available."

Paul speaks of a time when "sound doctrine" will not be tolerated. Tolerated in the Greek text is *anechomai* which literally means "to endure". In other words, people in the last days will not be able to endure or withstand truth. Their fragile egos will be far too sensitive to handle an honest assessment of their wicked lifestyles, so instead they will seek out silver tongued orators, who will tell them what they long to hear in order to affirm them. Repentance will be the last thing on their minds. They long to feel good about themselves, and as a result, they will spurn any message that speaks of their need for conviction and a humble brokenness, and instead, will diligently search until they find a preacher to tell them what they want to hear.

In this age of participation trophies and positive reinforcement, it is easy for us to see exactly what Paul warned about nearly two thousand years ago. This is why we have witnessed first hand in our generation not only women being ordained to preach, which is expressly forbidden in Scripture, but also practicing homosexuals being not only affirmed, but elevated to roles of leadership within the so-called church. And even now, we have churches in this country bringing in drag queens to do the children's Bible story from the pulpit. God have mercy on our nation! When you start compromising upon God's Word, it is a slippery slope that leads to everlasting damnation. Is it any wonder that Christ will tell these false believers at the sheep and goat judgment to depart from Him for He never knew them?!

Notice the progression in Paul's prophecy: first the people will reject sound Christian teaching, then they will embrace false Christian teachers who tell them what they long to hear, and finally they will reject the faith altogether, embracing myths (cults), as they come to realize the "religion" they have chosen is devoid of power. They will run from the truth to a watered down version of the truth, which will ultimately lead them into complete falsehood, and they will become far more enslaved than they have ever been. What a tragic end awaits those who refuse to look into the mirror of God's Word and agree that they are sinners in desperate need of saving!

And as his usual manner of speaking, once Paul has warned Timothy of the heretics who are sure to come, he returns to Timothy with the words, But you.."

**But as for you, exercise self-control in everything, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.** **2 Timothy 4:5**

Timothy was not destined to become one of those heretics of the faith. He had been called by God to be a herald of the gospel. And God would finish what He had begun in Him. So the young man was entreated by his mentor to "stay the course", to be self-controlled in all things and to endure for the sake of the gospel. There awaits a great reward to those who will finish the race. So in the meantime, we must run for all we are worth, to evangelize the lost by sharing with them the full measure of the gospel message of grace, mercy, belief, and repentance. To shortchange this message in any way will lead to a disastrous outcome. People need absolute truth, not watered down truth.

Finally, Paul charged Timothy to "fulfill his ministry". The word in the original text speaks of letting all the sails of a ship out in order to sail at full speed. This is the kind of follower that Christ wants us to be. All in, full speed ahead, holding nothing back as we share the gospel to this lost and dying world. Does this describe your service today. Are you at full sail for Jesus, or are you holding a part of yourself back from total commitment? This life is very short, and in the end of it all, nothing except what is done for Christ's everlasting kingdom will remain. We too have been charged in the sight of the Judge of all things. In the end, we will stand and give an account to Him. Or as Paul himself would say:

**According to God's grace that was given to me, I have laid a foundation as a skilled master builder, and another builds on it. But each one is to be careful how he builds on it. For no one can lay any foundation other than what has been laid down. That foundation is Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, or straw, each one's work will become obvious. For the day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire; the fire will test the quality of each one's work. If anyone's work that he has built survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will experience loss, but he himself will be saved — but only as through fire.** **1 Corinthians 3:10-15**

Will your endeavors for the kingdom survive the fiery test at The Judgment Seat of Christ? Or will they be burned to ashes in the flames? We are charged in the sight of The LORD to be heralds of His truth in this world. And we need to be full sail in pursuit of the kingdom. Do not love this world or the things of this world, but rather, fix your eyes upon Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. Run the race with all that you have to offer, and your reward shall be great. In the end, will you be a herald or a heretic?

**TRUTH!!!**