

2Timothy 4:1–8

The Ministry Christ Requires and Uses and Which, Therefore, His People Must Have

Thursday, August 3, 2023 • 2Timothy 4:1–8

Questions from the Scripture text: Whom does Paul charge in v1? Before Whom? What will the Lord Jesus Christ do? When? What else comes in final fullness at His appearing? What has Timothy been assigned to do in light of that day (v2)? What is he to preach? When is he to be ready to do so? What three things is he to do in this preaching? By what two things is it to be characterized? What time will come in Timothy's ministry (v3)? What won't people endure? According to what desires will they greatly increase their teachers? Because they have what sort of hearing/ears? From what will these turn away their hearing/ears (v4)? In how many things, therefore, must Timothy be sober/self-controlled (v5)? What must he endure? What sort of work must he do? What must he fulfill? Who is just about emptied (v6)? How does he describe the completeness of this emptying? What, then, is at hand? What three ways does he describe the completion of his ministry in v7? What is laid up for him? Who will give it to him? When? To whom else will He give it?

What sort of ministry does Christ require? 2Timothy 4:1–8 looks forward to the second serial reading of in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these eight verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **Christ requires and uses a specified ministry of preaching the Word, which therefore His people must have.**

Why the minister must labor. Paul solemnly charges Timothy (v1). When we have other pressures against us to do wrong, it is a mercy to have more pressure to do right. He has already reminded Timothy of the moment of his ordination to the ministry (cf. 1:6), and here he uses this form of speech to add another pressure similar to that of ordination vows.

What a weighty thing a vow is! It is made before God, Who sees all things, upholds all things, and will call all to account. And this God, the Lord, has also become Jesus Christ. He came into the world not to condemn the world, but that it might be saved (cf. Jn 3:17). What mercy! And how great is the condemnation if we disregard such mercy (cf. 2Th 1:6–10)! It is this Jesus (the Savior), this Christ (the Anointed), Who will judge. And He will judge all who have ever lived on the earth, in that day that He appears. He will appear as a Judge and a King.

For those who are tempted to live out of fear of what men may think, here are two great remedies: solemn charges and the coming appearance of Christ. We can see those who oppose Him and us, so we must perceive Christ by faith. Thus we must love His appearing (cf. v8), longing for faith to become sight, and living already before His face now. Our being before the face of Christ is why a believer must labor. This is why a minister must labor. And vows and solemn charges can help us do this.

In what the minister must labor. There are many things that a minister should do. But his great task is to proclaim the Word (v2). This particular verb means to herald publicly. There is a proclaiming of the Word that must be done from house to house (cf. Ac 20:20), but Timothy's primary task is the public preaching of the Word. Men won't always want him to do so (cf. v3–4); there will be times when they consider public preaching to be "out of season." But Paul reminds him of God's position on this, of the Lord Jesus Christ's position on this: the public preaching of the Word never goes out of season.

There are three things that he must especially do in this preaching: "convince, rebuke, exhort." The word behind "convince" means to make the hearer fully aware of his sin. "Rebuke" means to denounce sharply the hearer's sinning. The former treats the consciousness; the latter the conscience. The reader can understand why such public heralding will often be considered "out of season" by men! "Exhort" is that comprehensive word for being called alongside in whatever manner is necessary (admonish, comfort, counsel, help, etc.).

In what manner the minister must labor. It is important that the Christ-appointed content of preaching (convince, rebuke, exhort) be married to the Christ-appointed manner of preaching (with all longsuffering and teaching). If the people refuse to endure the preaching, the preacher must resolve to endure the people. How exhaustive (and exhausting!) is this demand: "all longsuffering." The minister of the gospel is literally prohibited from ever giving up. Thank God that the sufficiency is of Him Who equips us by His Word and Spirit (cf. 3:14–17; 2Cor 2:14–3:6).

So on the one hand, Timothy must preach "with all longsuffering," but how can he keep addressing these people who are resisting the truth? The answer is found in the second part of the manner that is commanded in v2: "with all teaching." Keep teaching. Keep teaching. Keep teaching. The Scriptures proclaim Christ from cover to cover. They make wise for salvation through faith *which is in Christ Jesus*. What is needed by those who are rejecting Christ... is Christ! And He has filled His Scriptures with theology about Himself, which He employs in giving Himself to us. A minister cannot give Christ to his hearer, but he can give that very teaching by which Christ gives Himself. This is the true "seeker friendliness." For, men are nothing but resisters until God seeks them. And He seeks them through His Word. He seeks them through teaching. So the minister must preach not only "with all patience" but also "with all teaching."

With what resolve the minister must labor. If he is to have all endurance in teaching, but the people will not endure being taught, then the minister must labor with resolve. He must "be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist." He must completely fill out the various parts of the work to which he is called ("fulfill your ministry").

First, a minister must be watchful. He must be sober. He must not take his eye off the ball (as various athletes might say). He must not take his hand off the plow. People will want to claim authority over their own ears and turn them in any direction but the truth. The sounder and steadier is one's preaching of the truth, the more the itchy ear will turn away from it. Just know in advance that will happen. Know in advance and be watchful. Don't let it throw you, when it happens.

This is an important lesson for the minister. This is also an important lesson for every believer. Various things will come in God's promise, especially adverse responses from other people. Know in advance that this will happen so that you can be watchful and undeterred when it does come. When affliction comes, if you are watching and praying, you can endure the affliction rather than changing course because of that affliction.

In particular, the minister must remember that he is always an evangelist. What he is preaching and teaching is the good news of Jesus Christ. So, what should he do if someone has itching ears, and rather than enduring the steadily preached sound doctrine wishes to listen to someone else who teaches the ideas of men (fables) instead of the truths of God? ... What should the minister do? He should preach and teach the gospel. He should evangelize. Isn't the hearer who acts like this just demonstrating his need for the gospel of Jesus Christ? Isn't such a hearer just demonstrating his need to be evangelized? Let gospel ministers, then, do the work of an evangelist. And let all who hear presume that what they need most is to be evangelized!

To what end the minister must labor. Finally, the apostle describes his own imminent fulfillment of his own ministry. He's telling Timothy, "now it is more important than ever that you fulfill your ministry ("completely fill out the various parts of the work to which you are called"), because I am just about done fulfilling mine.

It is a great comfort and encouragement to know that all of the work of the gospel is the Lord's. And He has assigned to each one the time, the place, the portion of the work that has been set apart particularly to him. Paul had a particular fight to fight, a particular race to run, by faith in Jesus Christ. Now Timothy's own faith is to be tested and employed in Timothy's own particular fight that he's been given to fight, Timothy's own particular race that he's been given to run.

And so for you, dear Christian. There is a fight that is assigned to you. There is a race that is assigned to you. And there is a Christ Who has been given to you, by faith, for that fight and that race. There's no use having anything left in the tank when you're done. Fight and run and fulfill your ministry. Paul was coming to the end of doing so, which is why he describes himself as being poured out as a drink offering. The drink offering would be poured out completely. Leave nothing in the bottle. To go back to sports analogies, "leave it all on the field" or "leave it all on the track." Or as my swim coach used to say, "leave it all in the water." Dear Christian (and especially if you are a minister, dear minister), you are a living sacrifice; you and your life are a drink offering. Pour it all out! We do not belong to ourselves; let us not live for ourselves. One great end to which we labor: that all that we are might be given up, given over, and given out to the Lord Jesus Christ!

But there is also a secondary end: the crown. The Lord, the righteous judge, is giving out crowns of righteousness. It is His righteousness and His crown, and it is reserved for a particular sort of person: the one who has loved His appearing. There are a multitude of these appearing-lovers, and so there are a multitude of these crowns of righteousness to be distributed. If you love the Lord Jesus Christ, and long for His appearing, and cling to Him as your righteousness, then there is (so to speak) a crown with your own name on it. It is laid up for you. But there is work to be done between now and then. It is the work that belongs to the one who loves Jesus's appearing. He is all of our righteous standing in our justification; He is the One Who has earned for us the crown. And He is all of the source of our own righteous living in our sanctification; He is the One by Whom we fight the fight or run the race between now and when we receive the crown. Do you love His appearing? Do you long for Him? Then live for Him while you wait upon Him for that crown. May Jesus be your everything. This is the end to which we labor: that we may honor and adore Him for Whom we long—Him Whose appearing we have loved.

There is much here, particularly for ministers of the gospel, but really for all Christians. And it is just as we might expect from an apostle's final charge. Before the face of the Lord Jesus Christ, serve the Lord Jesus Christ, in dependence upon the Lord Jesus Christ, out of desire for the Lord Jesus Christ. Such is Christianity (and how apply named!)

What tasks have you been given by Christ in this season of your life? Who is observing you as you do them? How can you be prepared to persist through affliction? How much of yourself are you giving in Christ's service? For what are you longing, as you serve?

Sample prayer: Lord, we praise You, who will judge the living and the dead. Forgive us for how half-hearted we have been in our service of You. Grant that we would instead be poured out as a drink offering. We cling to You, who are our righteousness, that we may be forgiven of all our sins and cleansed of all our unrighteousness, which we ask through You, Lord Jesus Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP19B "The LORD's Most Perfect Law" or TPH119E "Tell Me, O LORD, Your Way of Truth"

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Second, Timothy 4 versus 1 through 8. These are God's words. I charge you therefore before God and the lord jesus christ, who will judge the living and the dead. It has appearing in his kingdom. Preach the word. Be ready in season and out of season, convince rebuke exhort. With all long suffering and teaching.

For the time we'll come, when they will not endure sound doctrine. But according to their own desires because they have itching ears. They will heap up for themselves teachers. And then we'll turn their ears away from the truth. And be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things endure afflictions.

Do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. For, i am already being poured out as a drink offering. And the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. Finally, there is light up for me, the crown of righteousness.

Which the lord the righteous judge will give me give to me on that day. And not to me only but also to all Who have loved his appearing. So far the reading of god's inspired and And then toward So paul gives Timothy, great reason. To obey the command in verse 2.

Not only. Is paul charging him and invoking? The name of god and invoking the name of the lord jesus christ. But paul also reminds him that the lord jesus christ is going to appear and judge. There's two things here. One is a vow and one is A pressing reality, a coming reality.

Um, The charge that he gives and the name of god. Uh, similar in invoking. God's name, invoking, the lord jesus's name. To when we make vows like the kind of vows you make when you profess fake. Or the kind of vows That a parent makes when their child's baptized or the kind of bowels.

Than a minister takes. When he's being ordained. Of hours a promise made before god. Invoking his name. And the invoking of the name of god is. A holy act. Uh done. In the assembly before god's face. We recognize rightly from the bible. Westminster 21 that a vows, an occasional part.

Meaning on particular occasions. Of the worship of god. And so there's this holy vowel but even that is not as urgent. It is very urgent. That's the name of god has been vote on it. Or may. The lord help us to take our vows more seriously than Ordinarily. Vows are taken by many people.

And then, our flesh would Wish to take them. Well, that's very serious, because even more serious, that when the lord jesus appears, he is going to Or that the lord, first of all, the lord jesus will appear. And that when he appears, he will judge the living in the dead that.

Um, Christian theology. The truth about the lord. Jesus christ isn't just some Abstract thing, that that exists only in the realm of ideas. And is Is not something that we experience. By the time people can visibly, see. That they are experiencing and interacting with the lord jesus christ. And that they actually have been oh, their lives.

It will be too late. And so, paul is reminding. Timothy that even now he is before god, and before the lord jesus christ. And that there's coming a day when the lord jesus will appear. And when the lord jesus will judge That Timothy will be glad. That he took being before the face of god, seriously.

This is the sort of thing that Is a cure. For lying. Cheating hiding things. We often do them. Forget it. Do that forgetting. That we are before the face of god and And that he before whom we already. Are exposed and visible. That we will see him. One day and so it, behooves us.

By faith, that takes the word of god. Um, seriously. To. Act, as As those who know that we are before him every bit as much now, As we will know that we are before him. When he appears. And say, the minister laborers. Not only, because that's true for himself, but also because that's true for his people.

How will it be for them when the lord jesus appears? Well, they Well, they wonder why their minister Didn't. Speak to them more seriously, more urgently.

if he knew.

So why the minister must labor and what the minister must labor? There's, One word command here. Preach. He must. Breach, the word. The preaching of the word here is. Well, described further by the three. Verbs, convince rebuke and exhort. Convince. Means to make a hair fully aware of this and rebuke.

Means to denounce sharply. The sin of which he has been made aware. And exhort. Means to comfort council admonish. Whatever is necessary. To help someone turn from their sin. And so the preaching of the word here, the preaching of christ here. Really focuses on. Being sanctified through faith in christ.

Resting in christ. By him. We may turn from sin. On unto god. And no wonder then when he says preach the word, he tells them to be ready in and out of season. In season and out of season. People will.

Not think that it's the season. For this kind of preaching. And yet. When the public can And when people consider such public preaching to be out of season, Timothy must still do it anyway. Because with god, there's no in season and out of season, that's a human thing.

God is the one who called him to preach the word. God is the one before whose face he is. And so, For us, the same thing with every part of righteousness. Yes. There are things that are wise to do. At sometimes, you have to pick them, but Um, The things that God calls you to do.

You must remember always that you are before his face. So that others, opinions, men's opinions. Well, not keep you from doing that, which What's the lord requires? That's what a minister must do. And so what must we do? Well, we must be willing to have our sin told us To be made aware of it.

We must be willing. To be wounded as it were. To have our sin sharply denounced. But we also must look for the help of god. The help of christ, the help of the spirit. By way of the word. There is a sort of masochistic sermon hearing which someone thinks it's a really good sermon.

If he comes away, miserable. Almost candidate to church. That was like that. And just preached. And at the time i was in john and isaiah at the The church that i was already serving. And so i just reached the next sermon in john. Next sermon, in isaiah, And they both just happened to be wonderfully encouraging passages.

But the church that was candidating me thought. Maybe i hadn't preached, the word carefully enough because they didn't feel miserable when it was over. Well, they picked Very convicting texts for the next time and Felt sufficiently miserable when it was over. And thought that things had gone. Well, then But there's not just the convincing.

And the rebuking, there's the exhorting. There's god coming alongside by way of his word through the ministry of the preacher. To give you himself and to give you everything from him, that is needful. So not only is your righteousness. Entirely christ and what christ had done. But even Your sanctification, your righteous standing entirely christ and the Christ had done.

But the source for your righteous living, Is the lord jesus himself.

And so that's what a minister needs to do in preaching and that's what we need to look for. As we hear preaching, So you're not just going and paying attention and processing information. You need to be engaged with your conscience. Having things exposed. Hating the things that are exposed.

Getting god's help, who loves you and helps you strengthens. He gladdens you In himself. Consider the minister who preaches this way is seeking to do this work. There are two things that must characterize it at the end of verse two with all long suffering and teaching. So all along suffering, which means Um, You never get to tell god if you're a dad.

Her mom. Or minister. Haven't, i've been patient enough with them. That's the peter. How many times do i have to forgive them? Question? Problem suffering means you never. Have exhausted obedience to that command, and then all teaching. The lord has. Ordained to Reach the constants through the mind. And so patiently teaching again, teaching again, teaching again.

It's not like, People aren't made out of AI. Where you feed them information? You know, they're continuously. Um, Adapting in assimilating, all of the information they have ever gotten. So have remaining sin, we still have what we call the noetic, the thought effects of our sin, the effect on our ability to think From the word noose, which means mind newetic effect of sin.

We need to be instructed. 100 different times and dozen different ways. We must not give up instructing. The lord continues to be patient. He's not yet returned. Uh, something because he's slow because He's patient. He's willing for all of his People to be gathered in. His long suffering with us as we grow.

And so, there needs to be that patience and that teaching

They're also needs to be. Resolution the people. He says the time will come. He's not talking about one time at the very end of the age. Let's talk about something that Uh, that Timothy So already in paul's ministry, has seen already in his own ministry and it's going to come again.

You know, the last Timothy think that people not enduring sound doctrine was some quirk that happened once in Ephesus. No, it's something that repeats over and over again. And if the people are refusing to endure sound doctrine than we, Need to endure and persist, they're not enduring. So here because they have itching ears.

They turned their ears away from the truth to whatever. Uh, they want to heap up for themselves. Well, the minister should know in advance. That it's going to take resolve to overcome. They're itching ears and they're turning away from the truth. Turning aside. To fables.

And so, he He needs to be watchful. You'll be watchful. And all things, keep your eye on. On what you are supposed to be doing. Indoor afflictions. Now, this isn't just general afflictions. The afflictions in verse verse 5 are from the people in verse 4. Paul tells Timothy the church is going to afflict her ministers.

That in particular, those who are not enduring refusing to endure sound doctrine. Those who want to turn aside. To the ideas of men, instead of the word of god. Will afflict the minister. And so, the minister Must be resolved ahead of time to endure those afflictions. In fact. He has to do the work of an evangelist, who must remember?

There is a remaining sin and that there are those in the church who are not even converted. Although they profess faith and those who are converted and the battle against remaining sin, christ and union with him. Is the solution for that remaining sin. And so he reminds Timothy that.

All of the gospel ministry is well, gospel ministry. He has to do the work of an evangelist. He's going to be a continual gospel izer. As one through whom god is. Bringing people. To salvation in the lord, jesus christ. And so, There's no such thing as a minister who isn't on the front lines.

Yes, you go somewhere where the gospel has never been heard. You have to do the work of an evangelist. But you minister any church? That's 200 years old and subscribes to the westminster confession, you still have to do the work of an evangelist and for you. When you are, Interacting with the lord when you are.

Trying to apply the bible to your life live by faith in christ. Live. Out of the fellowship that you have with him and union with him. The holy spirit applying his life to you through his word. You are doing the work of an evangelist on yourself, and when we edify one another, when we build one another up and have christian fellowship, we're going to have to be doing the work of an evangelist.

The gospel is at the center. Of all of the service and ministry. That we have to one another in spiritual things. Wonderful chapter and communion of the saints. And The confession, which reminds us that We're not just to minister to one another and earthly things with spiritual Actually, it assumes spiritual spirituals the first.

And well should it be? And then to what end? That there would be nothing left. When he says, for i am already being poured out as a drink offering a drink offering you just Pour out completely. Now, we're happy when we saw that word. And sometimes it's translated shred a shed abroad or poured out.

In Romans 5, when I was talking about how that, what the Holy Spirit does with the love of God, because God's love is an exhaustible. And you can gush and and cover and it'll never run out. But we are not an exhaustible, and Paul was just about to be exhausted.

Just about to run out of the supply of pole.

Have a swimming coach. Who would be very upset if within five or 10 minutes? After my event. I gave any signs of life. You would take that as an indication, that I hadn't left, it all in the pool and To use this language poured, myself out. Paul is telling Timothy, I am already being poured out as a drink offering.

You also need to give all that you are.

When? As Paul leaves, he describes the life. Was fighting and racing and faith. Which the word faith there. Next to the words fighting and racing, a reminder that Uh, there are no resources in us, we can only live to Christian life and do whatever work he's called us to.

By the resources that are in Jesus. It may be someday in a job or as a dad. As a mom. Continuously saying, I can't do this. This is impossible. Plus exactly, right? It's supposed to be impossible, it can only be done. By what's in Christ? That's why he calls it.

Keeping the faith. So he says, I fought the good fight, I finished the race. I've kept the faith. When the crown that he gets is not according To how well he's fought and oh, well, he's run. What he's completed by faith. The crown that he gets is actually According to the righteousness of Jesus.

And so what's laid up for him? Is not some pension. Some. Retirement. Fund. There's some Rewards that is according to his service. Let's set up for him as a reward that is according to Christ. The corona of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge will give to him. Timothy, he lets Timothy know that.

This isn't just something for people like Paul. This is actually for every single Christian. Who has taken into a taken into account. But Paul reminded him of in verse 1. That the Lord Jesus is going to appear and he's going to appear as a judge. But for us, who love him.

He's going to appear as our joy. He's going to appear us and there are inheritance He is going to appear as our righteousness. He's going to appear as our award. And we live like those who know where before him we live like those. Like we will wish we had lived.

When he does appear. And we are those who love his appearing. Those who do so not To perfection, but rather by faith in Christ. They'll all receive the same crown that Paul received. It's pretty amazing. To think that when we're done with our work in this life, Lived by faith.

In Christ had a fellowship with it with him. Him applying the resources of who he is to us by his Spirit. But the same crown. That Paul was thinking about as he In his chains, he's writing to Timothy. This letter.

When he's thinking about the crown that's laid up for him. He says, well it's not laid up for me only but to all All who have loved his appearing. Same crown for us, praise God. Spray.

Father in heaven and pray that you would help us to live. By the same faith. Before Christ. Before you Thank you for your word. By which you do the necessary work in us that we may live this way that we might run this way. That we might fight this way,

When we pray, Lord, that you would Give us also. To live by the gospel. Minister to others. And to be poured out, Stir our hearts up towards the Lord Jesus cause The currently unseen reality to be so real to us. That we would be those who can be described as loving his appearing.

Even so, come quickly, Lord, Jesus and teach us. Teach our hearts by your Spirit. To desire, you're coming more and more. Where we ask it in your name.