

Pillar #1 – Unapologetic Preaching (2 Tim 4:1-5)

2 Timothy 4:1-5; I'm thankful for Doug Helmer, the Senior Pastor from HBC-West Indy, who preached in my absence last weekend

And trust that your faith is stronger and your fears relieved, b/c of it

This weekend, we begin a mini-series entitled **Pillars of the Church**

And I don't know about you, but when I hear the word *pillars*, I immediately think of old ruins from past centuries

Like these **(photo)** from the Roman empire; And these **(photo)** from the Greek empire just before that

Or these **(photo)** from Solomon's portico that flanked the temple in Jesus' day

Huge pillars that supported the entire structure

Without which, their wouldn't have *been* a structure*****

- And the same is true of church

Just like every *building* needs pillars to support the infrastructure, so too every *church* needs pillars to support the ministry

Namely, unapologetic preaching (**Pillars**), unashamed worship, unceasing prayer, and unwavering witness

Those are the pillars of the church; Not just our church, but every church

And to the extent that any one of those pillars is missing or weak, the church will be weak

Maybe even at risk of crumbling, and becoming a pile of ruins like those of old

So we're going to look at each one over the next month, with the goal of strengthening them in *our* church, and applying them in our lives (**Intro**)

- The first of which is unapologetic preaching; And the pillar *passage* is 2 Tim 4:1-5 The apostle Paul is writing, and says . . .

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: [2] preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. [3] 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, [4] and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. [5] As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

This is Paul's last letter, penned sometime between 62-64AD while in jail waiting to be executed; Which happened a few years later

And with all that he was facing, and all that he had done in ministry, and all that he could have told Timothy – he chose the first 3 words of v2 as some of his last . . .

Preach the word; As in proclaim it, herald it, tell it

Referring to the inspired Word of God, as found in the Bible

Don't just keep it to yourself, but tell others; Preach it

And so we do

We preach from the Bible and the Bible alone (v1-2)

That's the first part of unapologetic preaching; Preaching fr the Bible and the Bible alone

And notice, this isn't some mamby-pamby *request* on his part; An option for us to *consider*; Like, "Hey if you get the chance, and you can fit it in around . . .

The blessing of your pets, and your motorcycles, and your healings, and your dramas . . .

And the spontaneous testimonies to buy you time because you didn't prepare . . .

And the 500 other empty formalities in your worship service . . .

Could you preach the word a little bit?"

I don't think so; Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul said – *I charge you*; As in I command you; I order you

And then, added as much validity and weight and emphasis as he possibly could

Saying – *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*

Kind of like saying, "With God as my witness, you better get it done; He agrees with me on this, and his Son's coming back to judge whether or not you did it

- Far from a mamby-pamby request, it's a command with as much force as he could possibly bring; A command to *preach the word* As in, the whole counsel of God as recorded in the pages of the Bible Not your *own* counsel; Not your *own* thinking; Not your *own* philosophies, or those of others; But the *Word*

And not the word *plus* whatever else you think; Not the word *plus* religious traditions

Or *plus* pop psychology; Or *plus anything*

Just the *Word*; This thing; The Bible

The message in the book that you hold in your hands; Preach this Paul said

And so we do; We preach from the Bible and the Bible alone

Opening up to a passage every single week, and talking about what it means and how to apply it in our lives; Just like we're doing now

And we do it not only b/c Paul *tells* us to – though that would be enough; But b/c . . .

- **It's from God**

In 3:16 he says – *All Scripture is breathed out by God*; God

IOW *men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit* – 2 Pet 1:21

As he moved them, as he gave them the thoughts and words – they spoke and wrote

From which, we get *Scripture* – sacred writings from God; the all-knowing, all-powerful creator and redeemer of the universe

Which begs the question, why *wouldn't* we preach such a thing? Or resort to anything else? Especially so when nothing else can legitimately claim such divine origin

We preach from the Bible and the Bible alone, b/c it's from God

Not only that . . .

- **It's all we need**

The Bible contains everything we need for life and godliness

Once again, after saying that *all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for* various things, he says the purpose in v17 . . .

Is that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work

In which case, it's all we need

Mystical experiences aren't needed; The latest blah-blah from talk shows isn't needed
Self-help methods aren't needed; Chicken Soup For My Soul isn't needed . . .
Nothing more is needed to make us mature in Christ and equipped for every good work,
than the truth of this book

And 3rd here . . .

- **It's powerful**

We preach from the Bible and the Bible alone, b/c it's powerful

Heb 4:12 says that's it's able to pierce soul and spirit, and actually discern *the thoughts and intentions* of your heart; That's powerful

Far more than just words on a page, they're living and active, and see right through us

And when you put that together with God's promise to accomplish all that he has in mind
whenever his Word is preached – you get power (Is 55:11)

That's the first part of unapologetic preaching (**Summary**); And the reasons we preach
from the Bible, and the Bible alone

It's God's word; It's all we need; It's powerful; And it says so – *preach the word*; 2nd . .

- **We declare its truth, popular or not (v2)**

Paul says in v2 – *Be ready in season and out of season*

There are times in every culture, when the truth of God's word is popular and well-
received, and times when it's not

Like following times of disaster – people are usually more open to what God says

While in times of peace/prosperity, they're not; And the same is true on a personal level

But should any of that matter when it comes to declaring the truth of God's word? No

It's not our job to be social weathermen and speak up only when times are good

Paul says – *Be ready in season and out of season* (v2)

When it's popular and when it's not; When times are good, and when times are bad

That could mean every week like it is for me; Or every month over breakfast w/ someone
you know; Or once in a blue moon at your workplace, Or every *day* in your home

It could be the same truth over and over again, or a different topic every time – it doesn't
matter; What matters is that you're ready, and speak up

That you do what you're *supposed* to do, *when* you're supposed to do it, popular or not

- And u know as well as I, that some aspects of God's word aren't so popular these days

Like God's design for marriage between 1 man and 1 woman – thank you Chick-fil-A

And the existence of God in the first place, in the face of atheism

Or the *goodness* of God, in the face of disaster

Or the sanctity of life, starting at conception; Or biblical creationism vs. evolution

Or the selfishness of materialism

It's not so popular to declare the truth of God's word on those matters these days

And then there's the whole issue of the free exercise of religion – a biblical principle that

God's people have been fighting for, for over 3 millennia

And the battle continues today with *our* government

Like their effort to force religious institutions to violate their religious convictions by
offering birth control to their employees; Including the morning after pill

Or how about a German court recently, declaring that it's illegal for parents to
circumcise their baby boys

Which many people do, not just for physical reasons, but religious ones

And the list goes on and on; From marriage to materialism, life to liberty – it's becoming
increasingly *unpopular* to declare the truth of God's Word these days

Whether at the water cooler, or from the pulpit

But listen – declare it we must; And if you're a part of this church, declare it we will

Third . . .

- **We proclaim its authority without apology (v2)**

And therein lies the core of this pillar

You see, after Paul says in 3:16, that – *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable
for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness* . . .

He basically says in 4:2, use it – *Reprove, rebuke, and exhort with complete patience
and teaching*

All of which are strong words, on the heels of a strong command – *preach the word* . . .

To essentially say – proclaim its authority in people's lives, without apology

Bring it to bear as the sole standard by which they should live, and don't back down

Say what needs to be said, say it like it is, and let God do what he's going to do

That's the gist of these 3 words here in v2; Starting with *reprove* (elenchon in Greek) – it
means to expose someone's sin; So we do

We proclaim the authority of God's word without apology, by . .

- **Exposing sin**

For instance – “You know that thing you're all about? That practice you perpetuate? That
attitude you harbor? The Bible says it's wrong, and God seriously frowns on it”

That's a *reproof* in the biblical sense; It's speaking to someone in a way that exposes
their sin, and shows God's displeasure for it

The second unapologetic word, is *rebuke* (epitimaō)

If reproving someone is *exposing* their sin, rebuking them is . . .

- **Telling them to stop**

It's a sharp reprimand

“The Bible says right here that what you're doing is wrong, so knock it off; Repent”

That's a *rebuke* in the biblical sense – a strong, verbal confrontation for the purpose of
getting someone to stop sinning

Sometimes it happens corporately, like in a worship service or a Small Group; And
sometimes it happens individually over coffee, or in the lobby

Like the guy not too long ago, who was trying to get me to condone his pre-marital sex
with his girlfriend, and got all up in my grill to do so

And after a few minutes I just said – “Dude, you need to stop twisting the Scriptures,
stop rationalizing your sin, and *repent*; Admit it, confess it, and stop it”

Needless to say, that was the end of the conversation

But that's a biblical rebuke, and the second way to proclaim the authority of God's word
without apology

And then third, is *exhort* (parakaleo); As in . . .

• **Urging righteousness**

Pleading for holiness; Stressing godliness

Reprove, rebuke, and exhort; That's proclaiming the authority of God's Word without apology; That is, without softening the blow just b/c the truth might hurt (**Summary**)

Now, at this point you might be thinking, "Wow, that sounds so harsh and *unloving*"

If so, if that's what you're thinking – it's just the opposite

To proclaim the authority of God's Word without apology is the *most* loving thing you can do; B/c anything else gives people a false sense of security . . .

As they frolic in their sin or continue in their apathy

If we love people at all, we *must* proclaim God's word that way

• And do so *with complete patience and teaching* Paul says

Which means containing your frustration with those who reject it; Or are slow to accept it, or apply it, or love it like you do; Be patient with them

It they're willing to listen – keep teaching, keep talking, keep pleading with them

Proclaiming the authority of God's word in their lives, without apology

And do so with a sense of urgency; That's the 4th part of this pillar

We share its message with a sense of urgency (v3-4)

B/c *the time is coming* [v3] *when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, [4] and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.*

I don't think anyone would disagree that we're living in a time where that's true

Where people don't want to hear truth that *convicts* – whether from the pulpit, on a phone call, or in an office; They don't want to hear it

So they take their ball and their bat and go elsewhere

They won't endure sound teaching, so they pursue *suitable* teaching

Teaching that tickles their ears; Teaching that makes them feel good; Teaching that condones their attitudes, or lifestyle, or issues, or complacency

It's only what they *want* to hear, *when* they want to hear it

And many of them, end up sitting in pews week after week, if at all – buying into *half-*

truths, wandering *into myths*, and practicing a *form* of religion that has no power

All the while rationalizing it, and deceiving themselves to feel good about it

That's why we share the message of God's word every single week, with a sense of

urgency; B/c this may be the only time some of them will hear it

Or the last time they'll tolerate it; I trust that's *not* the case with you

And then last . . .

We honor the mandate no matter what (v5)

The mandate to preach the word, and fulfill our ministry – like he says in v5

As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. The ministry of preaching the word

The same ministry that God has entrusted to *us* as a *church*; And to *me* as a minister of the gospel *in it*; Just like Timothy

The idea being – honor the mandate; Take it seriously; Do it

Others may wander off, but make sure you're not one of them

Honor that mandate Paul is saying – no matter what the distractions, no matter what the difficulties, and no matter what the effort

And so we do

• In light of distractions, like temptations or successes or failures or problems – we strive to remain *sober-minded*; Keeping our head and staying focused

In light of difficulties and sufferings – we strive to *endure*; bearing up under them and persevering in the strength that God provides

And in light of the *effort* required, we're committed to do the work – *the work of an evangelist*; the hard work of preaching the gospel and discipling the saints

We're committed to honoring the mandate, no matter what (**Summary**)

The mandate to preach the word, and fulfill our ministry

It's one of the pillars of the church, upon which we build our entire ministry

And without which, we'd lie in ruins

Pray – Lord, thank you for your Word – how great, and rich, and precious, and true it is

And thank you for the privilege of preaching it, and declaring it, and proclaiming it, and sharing it; Find us faithful in that no matter what – inside our church, and out; And for all we enjoy, strengthen this pillar among us even more

In fact, use our gifts now for that purpose and more