

BIBLE TEXT | 2 TIMOTHY 4:1-5

1 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.

DEVOTIONAL FOR 2 TIMOTHY 4:1-5

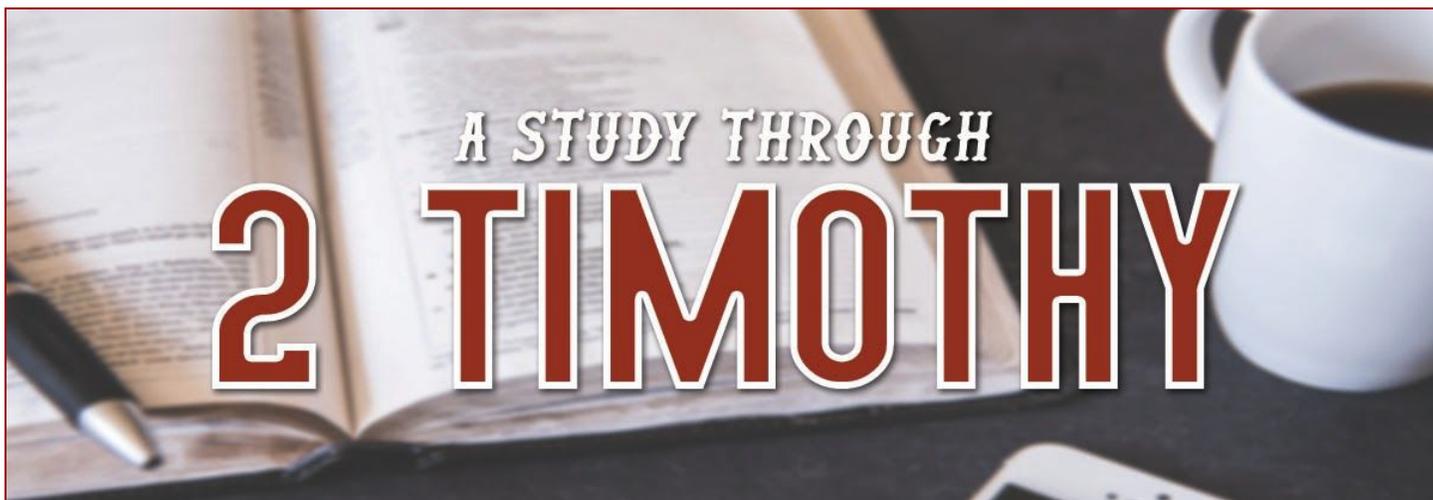
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A great person's last words are significant. They are a window that helps us look into his heart, or a measure that helps us evaluate his life. Some are sobering while others are just funny. Here are a few of examples:

- Sir Winston Churchill's last words were, "I'm bored with it all."
- Murderer James W. Rodgers was put in front of a firing squad in Utah and asked if he had a last request. He replied, "Bring me a bullet-proof vest."
- As Benjamin Franklin lay dying at the age of 84, his daughter told him to change position in bed so he could breathe more easily. Franklin's last words were, "A dying man can do nothing easy."

In today's passages we're reading Paul's last words to Timothy and to the church. It is interesting that he expressed no regrets as he came to the end. Though his own days were numbered, Paul thought of others and gave Timothy three final admonitions.

Preach the Word (verse 2). This is the first and most important responsibility Paul is sharing with Timothy. We see that this is important not only because the apostle is about to face death but also because both Timothy and Paul will be judged one day when Jesus Christ returns. As you and I read this passage it would be beneficial to remind



ourselves that, as followers of Christ, we too are going to give an account for our works, and sharing the gospel will certainly be one of them.

Be ready (verse 2). The need for being constantly prepared suggests that as children of God, we are always on duty. Just like soldiers start their training long before they are sent into battle, we too are to prepare ourselves for whatever opportunity the Lord gives us to share the gospel. Not only that, but a soldier's preparation and training doesn't stop when they encounter their first battle but it's a continuous process. That's one of the benefits of abiding in the word daily. Not only do we get to know our Lord more intimately, but we will always have the Word in our hearts ready to share with others.

Reprove, rebuke and exhort (verse 2). I show these three as one since they're complementary to each other. We are to *reprove*, or correct, those who are in error, *rebuke* those who are in sin and *exhort*, or encourage, those who are doing well to continue. As we share or remind others of the gospel, we should communicate the severity of our sin, yet the gentleness of our Savior's love.

In verses 3-4, Paul gives his son in the faith one more warning, which is not to lose faith when people just won't listen or heed the message of the cross. Paul specifically mentions *myths*, and though sometimes we might think of *myths* in terms of religion or false gods, think of it this way. Myths are false stories that promote speculation rather than knowledge of the Lord. They are tales that distract believers from the truth (the message of the gospel) resulting in ungodly behavior. With this in mind, and given the current world climate, it is easy to see how we can all give ourselves to *myths* (or conspiracy theories) that are not producing in us, or those who listen to us, knowledge of the Truth or godly behavior. Let Paul's life serve as an example of one who ran the race well, one who didn't get distracted by the temporary turmoil around him, and one who did not demand things to be easier as he saw the end drawing near.

Questions:

1. Take a few moments to read today's passage one more time and ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand the weight of verse 1.
2. Pray that God would help you see opportunities to share the gospel with others around you. If they are believers, pray that you both would be reminded of the message of the cross. If unbelievers, pray that you would take the time necessary to introduce them to our loving Savior.
3. Have you given yourself to *myths*? Ask the Lord for forgiveness and seek to make amends with those you might've distracted from Him.