

Forward Focus

Preach the Word

In 2 sermons in April 2016 we looked at what the Bible teaches that particularly applies to the context we are living and ministering in. You can find these sermons online at www.emmanueltolworth.org.uk Below is a summary of the second of these sermons for which we looked at 2Timothy 4:1-5.

The command Paul gives to Timothy is that he must preach the word. Let's think about this under the headings of Who, What, When and How.

Who...is your judge?

Paul begins his command to Timothy with a big build up in verse 1. He tells Timothy that he is charging him with this task in the presence of God and Jesus who is his judge. We need to remember that on judgment day it is Jesus before whom we will stand. It won't be anyone else, not friends, family, parents or other church family members. Our judge is Jesus, so it is his opinion of our lives, our families and our church that matters.

What...does He command?

To preach the word. The job of the church is to proclaim the message given to it by God. This is essential because the Word contains all that is needed for salvation (see 3:15) and all that is needed for Christians to be equipped for every good work (3:16-17). So Timothy must proclaim it.

When?...In season and out of season.

Picture a successful church. Imagine what it is like...

Without being a mind-reader I reckon you have just imagined a church which is in an 'in season'. It would be a popular church, one that sees lots of people being converted and sees lives transformed by the gospel on a frequent basis. There would be a buzz about that church. 'In seasons' are great times and we should long for them and pray for them.

But Paul says to Timothy he is to preach the word even if it is out of season. He warns Timothy that there will be times when people will leave the church to go and get their itching ears scratched with things that they want to hear (4:3-4). The church will at times shrink not because Timothy has been unfaithful but because he has been faithful.

So we need to change our view of success. A successful church is one that preaches the word no matter what, whether it is in season or out of season.

How?...Faithfully

With this word I am trying to summarise for us 4:5. Timothy is to keep his head even if people desert him, as they have already deserted Paul. He is to keep going in every aspect of ministry, being faithful to the end.

When Jesus tells a parable about his return he says that the praise we should be after is to hear him say 'well done good and faithful servant.' A faithful servant has his eyes always on his master, looking to be loyal and obedient to Him. Others' opinions won't matter so long as the master is happy.

So to be faithful to Jesus to the end will mean that we as a church look to preach the word. We will pray for an 'in season' but we won't judge success by it because we know that we can't control the season, that is in God's hands. But we can be faithful.