

IN SEASON | sermon series

No Time for Time Off

“Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction.” 2 Timothy 4:2ⁱ

The church of Jesus Christ is currently in a time of **URGENCY**.

Research shows that Self-identified Christians make up 63% of the U.S. population in 2021, down from 75% a decade ago. Christians continue to make up a majority of the U.S. populace, but their share of the adult population is lower in 2021 than it was in 2011.

Only 60% of all Protestants (38% of all Americans) say “yes” when asked whether they think of themselves as a born-again or evangelical Christian.

In addition, American adults who say they pray on a daily basis and those who say religion is “very important” in their lives have been trending downward in the last decade.^{ii iii}

The church is losing its audience and our Christ-mandated mission to “to seek and to save the lost” (**Luke 19:10**) becomes all-the-more urgent today.

Our message to the world should be bold, straight forward, and to the point!

In 2 Timothy we get just that from the Apostle Paul as he closes out his final days of life in a Roman prison.

This letter to Timothy proved to be the last of his spiritual instructions and was written just before his death.

As a grandparent looking back on life, sizing up what experience brings to the table, Paul reflects on his personal journey with Jesus.

Paul tells Timothy, you know about me and everything I have endured throughout my ministry – the sufferings and persecutions – but my teachings and the way I’ve pursued the goodness of the Lord by living out my purpose with faithful patience and love have been the strength that has given me the endurance necessary to model the life of Christ Jesus (ref. **2 Timothy 3:10-11**).

Paul uses his history with the Lord to prophetically envision the future. *It’s not going to get much better!* (**2 Timothy 3:13**)

Paul sees an urgency to get to the point and charges Timothy pointedly:

Even while we may be taking some much-needed time away from service or vocational ministry, our ordained soul is not to lose step in being ready to account for our life in Christ.

Without mincing words, Paul says boldly...

“Preach the Word”!

To preach is to proclaim, or verbalize, teach, instruct, urge, and inform.

What is the Word of God?

God’s Word is a manifestation of the mind and will of God. ^{iv}

Peter shares this about the Old Testament.

“...prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21).

The Word of God refers to the scrolls of the prophets – the Old Testament – but the Word of God also relates to the teachings of Jesus, the “logos” (word) of God

John 1:1-2, 14

¹ In the beginning was the Word [logos], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning.

*¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. **We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.***

- God conveyed the thoughts of Jesus, His speech, meaning, divine reasoning;
- God demonstrated through Jesus His principles, standards, and logic.
- The appearance of Jesus and everything He represented was the visible image of God in human form.
- Literally breathing out truth with every experience.

Paul said, "**All** Scripture is God-breathed." (2 Timothy 3:16)

"All Scripture is inspired by God [God breathed – NIV] and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. ¹⁷ God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16-17 NLT

- Sharing scripture in context with life offers a baseline of morality, absolute truth, and loving direction.
- We also receive instruction from God about the service we do for Him.

Don't stop **REPRESENTING** Jesus.

Chuck Swindoll said it this way:

In effect, Paul told Timothy, "Be ready – when you feel like it and when you don't; when it's early and when it's late; when you're tired and when you're refreshed. Be persistent. Don't give up. You'll face opposition, but stay focused on the task to which you've been called."

This is our challenge, too!

Even though you're on vacation, moving through retirement, experiencing a life changing experience of any kind – don't stop being the voice, the face, and the model of life for God.

2 Corinthians 5:18 NLT

"...this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him."

ⁱ All scripture references will be taken from the New International Version (NIV) unless otherwise indicated.

ⁱⁱ "About Three-in-Ten U.S Adults are Now Religiously Unaffiliated", Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C., December 14, 2021, <https://www.pewresearch.org/topic/religion/religious-identity-affiliation/>

ⁱⁱⁱ 2021 population is based on data usage by © 2010-2022 Macrotrends LLC - <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/USA/united-states/population>.

^{iv} <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary>