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# Sermon Notes

October 24, 2021

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

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## Be Ready! 2 Timothy 4:1-5

### The Homestretch

- ❖ As Paul writes Timothy, he knows the earthly portion of his life is coming ever closer to its conclusion
- ❖ With that bittersweet prospect in view, Paul begins his final appeal and charge that Timothy be faithful in his ministry to the Lord Jesus Christ
- ❖ Ephesus had once been a model church
  - now, it is drifting away and defecting from sound, reliable Bible teaching
  - Timothy is appointed by God to defend the faith and straighten things out in Ephesus
    - Timothy ministers on the basis of divine authority and under divine obligation
    - the sobering reality of the sovereign call of God

### The Presence of God

- ❖ All of us live in the presence of God
  - God is right here right now

- God knows your thoughts, the attitudes and affections of your heart
- ❖ Paul lists three things for us to remember about living in the presence of the Lord
  - Jesus will one day judge the living and the dead (*cf.* John 5:22-23, 27; Daniel 7:14)
    - all who have ever lived or who are still alive at the time of His coming
    - this includes faithful followers and nonbelievers alike
      - ♦ for believers, Jesus has already borne the judgment their sin deserves
      - ♦ but Jesus will still judge and evaluate the quality of how we have lived our lives for Him, the motives with which we have served Him, and the nature of any fruit we have produced (1 Cor 4:2-5)
      - ♦ those who serve the church in its preaching and teaching ministry will be judged with greater strictness (James 3:1, Heb 13:17)
  - the reality of Jesus' appearing should lead genuine Christ followers to live in an expectant state of readiness that is marked by a pursuit of purity and a zeal to do good works (v. 2)
    - don't waste any time in getting about the business the Lord has for you
    - Christian ministry centers on the Word of God
    - "Always be ready at any given moment to preach the word."
  - time is growing short... *the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching*

- people can, do and will gravitate away from listening to the truth
- the whole of Biblical history is littered with examples of this sad reality
  - Jeremiah laments the way false prophets prophesy lies and the people love it (Jer 5:31)
  - in His parable of the soils, Jesus explains how many who give visible, outward signs of being believers are actually unbelievers who remain lost in their sin
- **sound teaching** aims at producing whole Christians who are opposed to and reject a life based on worldly values and passions
  - in general, people love to have their ears tickled and search for teachers who will validate them and confirm their illusions for them
  - such people will flat out refuse to listen to the truth
  - many are so blindly and so willingly misled

### Be Ready!

- ❖ All who follow Christ must be ready to announce God's truth to others without wavering or equivocation.
  - this is no easy task
  - this task does not come naturally to fainthearted people like Timothy (or you!)
  - we must prepare ourselves for this and always be ready ***to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you*** (1 Pet. 3:15)

- be sober-minded and ask the Holy Spirit to lead you
- always be on the lookout for opportunities to plant a seed of truth and a word of hope
- in many cases, taking hold of such opportunities will provoke a measure of suffering
  - you must be prepared to ***endure suffering***
  - suffering for sharing the gospel is no reason to shrink back from your readiness and willingness to announce the good news of who Jesus is and what Jesus has done

### Personal Application

1. How conscious are you that you live in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus?
2. If you are “in Christ”, Jesus will one day judge and evaluate the quality of your life for Him, the motives with which you have served Him, and the nature of any fruit you have produced for His kingdom. How does knowing this day is coming effect and shape what you do and why you do it?
3. If you are not yet “in Christ” the day is coming when Jesus will judge you for the sin you have committed. The Bible says “the wages of sin is death”. Respond to Jesus’ invitation to bear the penalty of your sin for you by submitting your life to Him and obediently following His lead. Not sure how to do this? Speak with one of the leaders of this church or share with a trusted friend who is already following Christ.