

A life committed to sharing the good news of Jesus

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[0 : 0 0] Every day is a school day. That's the series we're in. And today we're talking about a life! Committed to sharing the good news of Jesus, which is quite a chunky topic. And so the first hour of this sermon, we'll be just covering the initial introduction.

So then we'll get into the bones after that, shall we? Let's read together from 2 Timothy chapter 4. In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge.

Well, it's chunky in that, isn't it? Preach the word, be prepared in season and out of season, correct, rebuke and encourage with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.

They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you keep your head in all situations.

Endure hardship. Do the work of an evangelist. Discharge all the duties of your ministry. Amen. And you keep your head in all alguém.

[1 : 54] And you keep your head in all alguém. And you keep your head in all alguém. And you keep your head in all alguém. next slide please so here's some background let's have a little bit of background a bit of context paul is writing to timothy he's written one letter he's writing another letter to timothy and paul is essentially timothy's mentor his father in christ whatever concept you want but he is his mentor and he refers in 1 corinthians 4 to timothy as my son whom i love so there's a real relationship here a real relationship where paul is saying this is some stuff that you need to know this is stuff that we need to know that we need to hear and understand and um the whole of the the the letters the two letters that timothy wrote to paul is all full of um of of advice and guidance and whatever he also says by the way at the end of to timothy could you get somebody to bring my coat i left it behind which is the sort of thing that i'd write in a letter because i leave coats behind all the time but paul is in prison paul is in prison he's been in prison because he spent his time preaching the gospel and people took against him and have locked him up and he knows that his time on earth is coming to an end he knows that he is going to be executed i am being poured out as a drink offering a libation he's being poured out as this drink offering i fought the good fight says paul i've run the race and now i await my crown of righteousness the paul is really clear where he's at his time is coming to an end his time on earth is coming to an end and actually he's rather looking forward to it if you if you read through what he's saying he's saying i've done it i've done my bit i've i've run the race i've fought the fight and now i'm going to go to heaven where i will be welcomed with a crown of righteousness the crown awarded to each of us who know and love jesus as when when we die and go to heaven there's a crown awaiting for us which is rather nice but what paul is doing here is he's passing on the baton he's saying just as i have now you must just as i have now you must and there's not an arrogance in there there's not a look at me and and uh aren't i clever there's a straightforward honesty which is my son whom i love timothy do what i did share the good news of jesus as i have shared the good news of jesus timothy over to you fella over to you and timothy have read that and probably i think if i was reading it thought goodness that's a big calling there's some big shoes to fill paul is saying just be like me do what i did and then you look at what paul did and you think goodness there's a calling next slide please and then he writes i give you this charge

it's a lovely phrase i've been reflecting on it for a little while it's a lovely phrase this i give you this charge not it's not a here's a suggestion or you could do this if you feel like it it's a grave and solemn responsibility it's a grave calling that timothy is receiving a grave charge matthew henry writes this how awfully this charge is introduced the eye of god and jesus christ was upon him so this is something which we mustn't lose sight of and nor must we minimize nor must we say well it's yeah it's okay it's a sort of can if you want and this is a solemn charge that we each have too this is not just for timothy this is for each of us today i give you this charge do the work of an evangelist discharge your duty we are christ's ambassadors to corinthians 5 what does that mean do the work of an evangelist there's a whole book on that but essentially are we going and are we ready to share what we have with other people are we ready by word and deed to be the people who point others to jesus because that's what we're asking to be that's what we're being asked to do this grave and solemn responsibility that paul is passing to timothy is passed to you as well discharge your duty do what you know you need to do and it's hard isn't it because we can pretend that we don't know what we need to do we can pretend that actually we well we haven't really got that calling it's not really for me but each of us who know and love jesus have a responsibility a duty to discharge to tell others about jesus and we'll come on to how and what that means for you in a moment but just allow that to settle in your heart and in your head just for a moment this is part of who we are if we call ourselves a follower of jesus this is part of who we are if we want to be having run the race won the fight this is part of our grave and solemn responsibility the idea of being christ's ambassadors by the way is really interesting if you think about an ambassador an ambassador is a representative of the monarch so we have ambassadors in this country to lots of countries in the world and each of them are simply the king's person they represent the king the man or woman who represents the king in whatever country you want to name and so we are representatives of god wow we are representatives of god and that's why it's a big thing a grave responsibility i give you

this charge let's go to the next slide please preach the word for when i preach the gospel i cannot boast says paul in 1 corinthians 9 i cannot boast since i'm compelled to preach woe to me if i do not preach the gospel i've got to do it i've got to do it i've got to be a person who shares the gospel i'm challenged by that i'm challenged by that verse and wondering do i really feel woe to me if i don't preach the gospel but paul is saying this is not just for few this is for all in season and out of season we must always be ready to share the gospel even if we're not expecting to this is a complex one because what what we can sometimes come across here is i am going to tell you the gospel whether you want to or not hear it or not at all times and in all places at all at all whatever i feel like it and i don't believe that's what paul is writing to timothy i think we have to be ready to share the gospel at all times we have to be ready to be asked are you one of those bible bashers or as a friend of mine used to call me a god botherer which i rather liked i thought i think i probably am a god botherer actually what do i say well it's a bit awkward to answer that in the middle of marks and spencers or in in a restaurant or at work am i ready to preach the gospel am i ready to own jesus wherever i am be ready to share the gospel even when i'm not expecting to even when the last thing on my mind was this morning i'm going to share the gospel of jesus but actually that's what happens sometimes somebody asks you a question or you come into a situation and you think i've got to share i've got to tell somebody i've got to tell this person not because i want to be dramatic not certainly i hope and trust and pray that i want to show off but because it's the right time to do it because now is the right time in season and out of season whenever we are called to do it and we're called to rebuke correct rebuke and encourage i've probably said this before the bio tapestry has a a part of it a frame of it in the bio tapestry but you can't know what you call a scene in the bio tapestry and it has the king prodding the troops with a big spear and it says the king encourages his troops correct rebuke and encourage they're hard words aren't they they're hard words they're words of seriousness they're words where we say actually i think you're wrong there what you've just said or done or been was wrong and i want to explain why we need to be ready to correct and encourage but let me tell you the other thing that we need to do i need to

be ready for you to correct me for you to rebuke me and for you to encourage me because if i'm not i'm not hearing the truth because sometimes i get it wrong no put it a different way often i get it wrong sometimes i get it right and as i've been considering this part of my challenge to me and i guess part of my challenge to you is how ready are you and how ready are we as a church to correct rebuke and encourage and receive correction rebution and encouragement rebution isn't a word by the way i just made it up because it sounded nice how do you respond to that what's your sense of that allow that to pot around your head but this doesn't mean that we should be insensitive or unkind we have to be sensitive and patient says paul so the balance here and this is why this is complicated and this is why sharing the gospel of jesus is a really serious thing because on the one hand it's dead easy go out there this afternoon go and stand outside clara's and and and tell people the gospel of jesus and if they say oh it's rubbish correct rebuke and encourage all right if you want to but we also have to be patient and sensitive and that means we have to be alive to the work of the holy spirit in us and alive to his prompting alive to the prompting of when he is saying speak and alive to the prompting of when he is saying be quiet and that will be different for each of us because each of us has different calling different skills different gifts and different personalities and that's okay because that's who god made us so do you see we have to be ready at all times we have to be ready to share the gospel we have to know that the time might happen this afternoon where it's down to you to tell somebody about jesus and we have to do that honestly and straightforwardly and sometimes say you know i'm not sure i agree with you what you're saying there or i'm not sure i agree with what you did there but at the same time we have to do that with generosity with kindness with sensitivity with patience sometimes we can be praying for somebody for a long time sometimes we can pray for somebody for years be patient for years and you think when lord will my encouragement of them to look to you bear fruit when when the time's right be patient allow god to do his work in the time that he

wants to next slide please and then there's an urgency i tell you now is the time of god's favour now is the day of salvation to corinthians 6 how then can they call on the one they have not believed in and how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard and how can they hear without someone preaching to them 1 corinthians 10 how can they how can they know if we haven't told how can they believe if they haven't heard and how can they hear if somebody hasn't preached they can't so there is this need for us and for us as individuals but also for us as a church to take seriously our responsibility to preach the gospel of

[19 : 04] Jesus Christ to share the truth of Jesus Christ because we don't know what's going to happen tomorrow we don't know whether individually tomorrow will happen we don't even know whether the world will happen tomorrow incidentally and it's important with world politics as it is Jesus will call the end of the world not a political leader or a despot or a dictator Jesus will say well God will say now okay so it's not down to somebody else they might finger on a button somewhere but it's not up to them almighty God will come will Jesus will come when the time is right but there is an urgency we can't say yeah we'll have a we'll build an evangelistic program and we'll do it from 2027 onwards because we need us to get ourselves sorted out a few books to read first that's not how it works this needs to be part of our understanding of our responsibilities as

Christians as responsibilities of people if you're members of a church if you're a member of Whitby Christian Fellowship for here if you're not for your home church okay moving on this is a hard question it's a question i've been asking myself do we know the gospel do you know the gospel do you know the good news of Jesus and we have to be honest with ourselves there and that isn't do you know the do you know the basic truth of what Jesus says love me love other people repent of your sins receive forgiveness and receive the Holy Spirit and become a Christian that's really really important that's really really important but what about me what about somebody who says to me Andy tell me why you're a

Christian why are you a Christian I was cutting our grass yesterday and our neighbour came out and I had some headphones and I was listening to some music and he said what are you listening to you're listening to hymns and I thought what a weird thing to say and I wasn't actually listening to hymns I was listening to something else I'll not tell you but he likes to say that sort of thing sometimes and he likes to say you know if you're a Christian why do you think why has this happened or that happened why did Covid happen and why did because he likes to he likes to he likes to talk about lots of stuff am I ready to say no I'm not listening to hymns but there's something that is worth telling you maybe I will listen to hymns next time because there are some really good hymns because they point me to Jesus what about you what about your situation the doodah yeah oh it's come back again it's back again now

I suppose this is the question that I'm wrestling with and I want to ask you to wrestle with and why it's a complicated issue do you know what you will say why do you follow Jesus Christ and I suppose that the truth of the matter is what has done for you what is your testimony what is your word of encouragement what is it that you can point to to say the reason that I'm do I believe in Jesus is this and that will be different for each of us but when we're told that we need to be ready when we're told that we need to be prepared when we're told that we need to be ready in season and out of season to share the gospel are we ready do I know what I want to say do I know what

God's done for me and have I realized what God's done for me have I picked it up have I logged it somewhere and for each of that will be very different for some of us that will be very spectacular and for others of us it will be pretty unspectacular my testimony is very boring I grew up in a Christian household and at some stage in my early teens I made a decision to be a Christian there's no flashbang experience there's all sorts of stuff that happened since others of you will have a really exciting testimony of when God made himself known to you that's great that's great but each of us need to be ready to share Psalm 51 asks God to restore the joy of our salvation how can we preach the gospel if we don't really know the joy of our salvation that doesn't mean by the way are you bounty and happy and always exuberant that means somewhere deep inside you somewhere that is rock solid do you know that you are a child of God fully loved fully forgiven and fully accepted knowing that

[25 : 23] God knows you through and through inside out and loves you to bits and forgives you and holds you and has a future for you and a hope for you do you know that if you don't maybe ask somebody to pray with you afterwards or maybe commit to going home and just sitting and quietly saying to God just help me understand that that's true is Jesus at the centre of your life and then Ephesians 3 do you know how wide and long and high and deep of Christ in your heart and your experience when I read that verse

I think of some very very faithful people in Barmouth Baptist Church in the 1970s as a family we used to go to Barmouth and on Sundays on holiday we used to go on Sundays we used to go to Barmouth Baptist Church and there was a man called Uncle Robin who was 473 years old and had been working in the Thunder School for almost all his life and we used to sing deep and wide deep and wide that's that half of you often here's a song do you know how deep and how wide is the love of Christ because if you don't you're missing out on something so precious in your life with Jesus next slide please but it's not all about words interestingly as we were praying before the service

John reminded of the Franciscan saying preach the gospel at all times and if necessary our life has to point people that's really hard and when I was thinking about this this morning and when I was thinking about preaching the gospel obviously the words are important but what does my lifestyle look like what does my behaviour look like what do my words look like my attitudes my actions look like I can be as nice as I like on a Sunday morning this is as good as it gets by the way but if I'm horrid for the rest of the week if I snarl and snap and call people rude names and I'm lazy and I steal from work and I am altogether a thoroughly unpleasant person

I am not preaching the gospel of Christ I am preaching the exact opposite and then somebody said what you go to church well yes church is full of sinners you know like me why you're very good this is about my love given over to Jesus what happens when your work or your life or whatever it is becomes really crying on a wet Thursday afternoon when it's dark and it's cold and something's gone wrong I'm not asking you to say hallelujah someone's just run into my car that's marvellous but what's my response when I stop the car and get out do I holler and scream or am I ready to preach the gospel at all times in all situations generously and patiently and kindly our attitudes our response to trials our kindness and compassion all these things need to be sanctified through the work and the power of the

Holy Spirit I can't do it I will get irritated I will behave badly but the Holy Spirit within me can change who I am change my attitude change my behavior change my thoughts change my responses and he can do that for you too yeah I've got a short fuse ask the Holy Spirit to lengthen your fuse I can't do with that sort of behavior ask the Holy Spirit to help you be doing with our responses who I am as a person is a better preacher than what I say and that's what some people say as Francis said this and some people say he didn't but it's a

[31 : 20] Franciscan saying it doesn't really matter it's rather a nice reminder always preach the gospel and if you have to say something does my life does your life radiate Jesus because that's what people will be attracted to that's why people come into church come into the cafe come into alpha come in and talk to you on the street or talk to you across the garden fence or in the corridor of your flat or wherever it is people will see something people will see something and say I could do with a drop of that what have you got that I have got wonderful question to ask how can you feel so peaceful unworried whatever the word is at times like this so to go back again be ready to preach the gospel in season and out of season always be ready but that means be ready behavior next slide please itching ears

I turned over a page too soon then no idea what I'm going to say itching ears people are turning away from the truth and turn aside to myths they won't tolerate sound doctrine goodness me is that a modern phenomenon isn't that interesting that all those years ago this was written and we could have written that this morning people just want to find what we want to hear we have to watch ourselves we have to watch ourselves because it's easy to be distracted by myths which satisfy our itching ears I not infrequently have people say to me not in the church context in a different context oh have you read what's happening and then you get this extraordinary conspiracy theory really is that happening yeah I've read it

I heard it on the radio I'm really sorry just because you've read it in the paper or heard it on the radio doesn't make it true okay where's the truth here there's the truth test everything through the scriptures I can find you somebody who will tell you and try to convince you that almost anything even the most unbelievable stuff is true it's called the internet what a marvelous invention that is but do I have itching ears and do I to try and try and find somebody who will rationalize my particular behavior or thoughts or beliefs or am I ready to preach the gospel by saying this is the truth inconvenient though you might find it guide me in your truth and teach me for you are my

God my savior and my hope is in you all day long what a wonderful heart's cry that is from the psalmist guide me in your truth and teach me for you are God my savior and my hope is in you all day long friends brothers and sisters we have a responsibility to each other if I am turning from the truth please tell me please tell me particularly because I have the privilege of preaching and particularly because those of us who have the privilege of preaching have to be very careful because I don't want to teach error but if I say something or if you say something and we need to respectfully challenge each other let's do it in a place of kindness compassion but truth that's why

Jesus created church because together we'll get it more right than individually as long as each of you and I take our responsibility seriously to avoid the itching ear syndrome because it's so dangerous and today in our modern society it's particularly dangerous although reading some background stuff I suspect that the temple courts were fairly full of conspiracists as well they just hadn't got mobile phones to share it on at the time moving on be sober keep your head in all situations okay really important as we share the gospel we can lose direction and lose our wisdom so easily and I was reminded of this as I was preaching the prodigal son when he was at his lowest he was sitting with some pigs eating their pig pods eating their food and came to his senses means that for a time he had lost his senses lost his head he started making poor decisions and went from poor to bad to even work he was in a mess he lost his head and he came to his senses we need to be our head and if this morning you're feeling oh that's okay come to your senses cry to God we might have to endure suffering and injustice there's a whole lot to say there but

[38 : 38] I won't because time's on but we might have to it's not fair that that person has said that thing it's not fair that because I said that thing which I believe to be true I am being punished or treated differently or shunned we might have to endure that for the gospel of Jesus therefore let us throw off every encumbrance and the sin that so easily entangles and let us run with endurance the race set out for us let us fix our eyes on Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith keep your head and if you've lost your head come to your senses if you need some help with that again pray with somebody last slide please this is really important

Paul is writing to Timothy saying I'm about to die over to you Timothy and Timothy was picking up the baton and now we at Westcliff Church we Whitby Christian Fellowship and after you're visiting us you and your home church are picking up the baton all those years later I think I've got this accurate I asked John but I might have missed if I've got it wrong John will tell me the first minister was William Jackson although James Brownfield began the work in the era in 1770 quite a long time ago many of us remember it particularly that cold winter in 1770 it was bad wasn't it John is the 20th minister of this church we've picked up the baton from those who have gone before and just in your mind's eye for a moment think back to the people who laid the first stones of this building all those years ago and think what they would look at now and think goodness me that's different but that's good because the gospel of

Christ is still being preached in this place why did we decide and believe that it was right to take on this building when it was a bit of a pickle well firstly because we believe God said this to and secondly because we really wanted it and so did the previous owners of the church wanted it to remain a place of a worshipping community and that's what we are but we will hold it for a fleeting moment and then we'll pass it on to the next lot and that's why we need to preach the gospel because we need the next lot because some of us here looking around with enormous respect are not necessarily as young as you used to be we need the next generation who are you going to pass the baton to have you taken up the baton by the way and who are you going to pass it on to we need to be ready at all times to preach the good news of

Jesus Christ are we ready amen you Thank you.