

## Preach the Word

**Text: 2 Timothy 3:10-4:5**

**Introduction:** One of the things I have learned as a pastor is that there are some topics that the church's preaching ministry must return to over and over again. As a younger pastor, I thought that pastoral ministry is linear. You go in. You teach the people. The church moves forward. And you don't necessarily have to keep reteaching the same things over and over again.

I've learned that isn't true. I've preached on preaching before, but many of you weren't a part of our church then. Not only that, but we are also human and sometimes need to be reminded of the same things over and over again. Especially the most important things. And one of the most important things for a healthy church is biblical preaching.

That's my main idea this morning: **God's people need biblical preaching.** It's the most important thing I do each week as your pastor. To stand here before you on the Lord's Day and preach God's Word. There are a lot of other responsibilities of a pastor, but you should know that this is the most important one.

I have a pastor friend who is a bit younger than me, and one day he was telling me about all the things he had to do that week. I looked at him and said, "All you HAVE to do is preach on Sunday." He looked at me like, "Yeah, right," but I was serious. There's always another hospital visit to make. There's always another counseling session to be held. There's always another administrative task to complete. There's always another conflict or challenge to resolve. Another email to respond to.

But the truth is that we all only get 24 hours in the day. You. Me. And my pastor friend. Better to leave all the other responsibilities of pastoral ministry incomplete so you can faithfully preach the Word on Sunday than run around trying to complete all the other tasks and fail to give adequate time to feeding God's people.

So, I preach this sermon for a few reasons...

1. As your pastor, to let you in on a little bit on my philosophy of ministry. Why I do the things do. Why I prioritize preaching over everything else in pastoral ministry. And why I preach the way that I do.

2. This subject is foundational for our church. Goshen Baptist Church is committed to biblical preaching. It's who we've been. It's who we are. And it's who we're going to be. We believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, and therefore, it must be proclaimed.
3. I also want you to know what you should expect and even require of me or any other preacher who steps into this pulpit. Preaching is a weighty task. God's people are right to expect biblical preaching each Lord's Day.
4. I hope that hearing a sermon on biblical preaching will encourage you to take this time seriously each week. Prepare your heart. Prepare your mind. Come each week ready to hear from God.

At the Southern Baptist Convention this week, the North American Mission Board shared a video about a church plant in Wyoming. The planter was talking about raising up preachers in his church so that he could send them out to places in Wyoming that do not have a faithful, gospel preaching church.

What a privilege we have each week to come together in this place and open God's Word together. We should do it seriously. We should do it joyfully. And we should do it expectantly.

Our text this morning is 2 Timothy 3:10-4:5. You can find it on page 936 in the black pew Bible in front of you. If you don't own a Bible, we encourage you to take the pew Bible with you when you leave.

(Read 2 Timothy 3:10-4:5...Pray)

**God's people need biblical preaching.** Let's look together at nine characteristics of biblical preaching.

### I. **Biblical preaching is before God.**

#### A. **Look at verse 1 of 2 Timothy 4. (Read vs. 1)**

1. **This helps us see the seriousness of preaching.**
2. **Paul begins with a verb that is translated "I charge" in the ESV.**

3. Some translations say “I solemnly charge” or “I solemnly urge,” which I think really gets at the meaning of what Paul is seeking to communicate here.
4. Paul takes very seriously this charge that he is giving to Timothy.

**B. But why? What’s the big deal? It’s because it is BEFORE GOD.**

1. It is in the “presence of God.”
2. The Apostle Paul is writing to his son in the faith Timothy. He’s writing from prison. He knows that he has very little hope of release. Death awaited him. So, he sought to give Timothy, his son in the faith, some parting instructions as Timothy continued in the work of the ministry.
3. Here Paul reminds Timothy that ultimately God is the only judge. It is God who will judge both the living and the dead.
4. And the truth is that all Christians should live and serve in light of this coming judgment. 2 Corinthians 5:10 says, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.”
5. All Christians should live and serve in light of this reality, and preachers and teachers especially should preach and teach in light of the coming judgment of God. James writes, “Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness” (James 3:1).
6. The author of Hebrews writes, “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you” (Heb. 13:17).

**C. The point is that everything we do in service to God is really for an audience of ONE.**

1. We do it for the Lord. We’re not trying to impress the people around us. We’re not seeking the applause of man.
2. We only want one day to hear the Lord say, “Well done, my good and faithful servant.”
3. That goes for me as I preach. It goes for our praise team as they lead us in song each week. It goes for our Sunday School teachers. Our children and youth ministry volunteers. It goes for all of us who use the gifts that God has given us to serve Him and our brothers and sisters in Christ in some way.
4. Our primary aim is to please God. If God is pleased, it doesn’t matter what anyone else says or doesn’t say about us. And if God is not pleased, it still doesn’t matter what anyone else says or doesn’t say about us. It only truly matters what God says.

**II. Biblical preaching is Word-driven.**

**A. Verse 2 begins with one simple command that is the focus of what Paul is saying to Timothy in this section of the letter.**

1. Paul tells Timothy to **PREACH THE WORD.**
2. To “preach” means “to herald” or “to proclaim publicly.”
3. This is what the town crier would do in that day. He served as an imperial messenger, going through the streets of a city to announce special events, such as the appearing of the king. His duties also included public announcements concerning new laws or government policies and actions.
4. So, what was the nature of this herald’s proclamation? Did he get feedback from the people before determining what to say? Did he have the authority to change the king’s message to say whatever he wanted it to say? Of course not!
5. The herald was given a message by the king, and his responsibility was to proclaim it to the people. It wasn’t up for debate.

6. That's what preaching is. We've been given a message from God to proclaim, and the preacher's responsibility is to proclaim it. He doesn't first test the winds of public opinion. Neither does he have the authority to alter the message. He simply proclaims the message given to him by an authority much greater than his own.

**B. And what does Paul say that Timothy is to preach? The WORD. PREACH THE WORD.**

1. This is the "sacred writings" or "holy Scriptures" from 3:15.
2. Paul is telling Timothy to preach the Bible.
3. For Timothy this was the entire OT and perhaps part of the NT. For us this is the entire Bible both Old and New Testaments.

**C. Now, as we think about this command to "Preach the Word," look at what Paul says about the Bible just a few verses earlier.**

1. (Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17)
2. Can you see how what Paul says in verses 16 and 17 of chapter 3 informs what he says in chapter 4?
3. If the Bible is the very Word of God, we should want to know what it says. If the Bible is truly profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness, we should want to know what it says.
4. This is why I preach the way that I do. It is based on the conviction that we have before us this morning the very Word of God. God has spoken. He has revealed Himself in this book. So, I want to know what God has said, and I want to share it with you.
5. So, you won't hear me step into this pulpit and speak from my own thoughts or feelings. My thoughts aren't particularly good. And my feelings can deceive me. But the Word of God will never return void. Faith comes through hearing and hearing through the Word of Christ.

6. The nature of the revelation we have from God demands that it be preached.

**III. Biblical preaching is Christ-centered.**

**A. Look at what Paul writes to Timothy in verse 15 of chapter 3. (Read vs. 15)**

1. What are the sacred writings that Paul is talking about? I said a moment ago that it's the Bible. The Scriptures.
2. But really, Paul is talking about the OT Scriptures. Timothy hadn't been acquainted with the NT Scriptures since childhood. The NT was just being written. As Paul wrote this letter, some of the NT was still to be written.
3. And what does Paul say to Timothy about the OT Scriptures in verse 15? They are able to make him "wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."
4. Do you see that? We know that the NT is about Jesus. But I want you to know that the OT is about Jesus too. I hope you saw that very clearly as we made our way through 1 and 2 Samuel.
5. This is the same point that Jesus made on the road to Emmaus. The text says in Luke 24, "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" (Lk. 24:27).

**B. Goshen, the Bible is about Jesus.**

1. Therefore, biblical preaching is about Jesus. It's Christ-centered. Jesus ought to be the focus of every sermon.
2. Not Old Testament saints. Not moral commands. Not contemporary problems. Not tips for a better life.
3. JESUS! You need Jesus! I need Jesus! The world needs Jesus!
4. Therefore, we preach Christ!

#### **IV. Biblical preaching is persistent.**

##### **A. The ESV says, “be ready in season and out of season.”**

- 1. The HCSB says, “persist in it whether convenient or not.”**
- 2. Both translations help us understand what Paul is saying here.**
- 3. The phrase “in season and out of season” could be understood as pointing either to Timothy or his listeners.**
- 4. I think we can see how both could have been in view as Paul wrote these words.**

##### **B. If Paul intends to refer to Timothy, then he is saying...**

- 1. The preacher must be prepared to preach the Word whether he feels like it or not.**
- 2. Believe it or not, I have Sundays just like you where I don’t necessarily feel like getting out of the bed that day.**
- 3. But biblical preaching is not about how the preacher feels because that changes. It is about God. And He never changes.**

##### **C. If Paul has Timothy’s listeners in mind here, then he is saying that...**

- 1. Timothy must declare the truth regardless of whether his hearers find it to be a particularly convenient time to listen or whether they find his message particularly appealing.**
- 2. Verses 3 and 4 seem to demonstrate that this is the primary idea behind Paul’s instruction to “be ready.” (Read vs. 3-4)**
- 3. The “itching ears” phenomenon was already going on in Paul’s day, and it is rampant in our own. There are many churches in our community that are faithfully preaching God’s Word this morning. There are also likely many who are wrapped up in a consumer driven**

**mentality that is all about trying to give people what they think they need rather than simply telling them what God has said.**

- 4. We must be a church that persistently preaches the Word.**

#### **V. Biblical preaching reproofs.**

##### **A. Remember, Paul says in 3:16 that all Scripture is profitable for reproof.**

##### **B. Now in chapter 4, Paul instructs Timothy to reprove in his preaching.**

- 1. This carries the idea of correcting misbehavior or false doctrine.**
- 2. Surely Timothy would do this as he opened the Word of God to the people of God in their public gatherings.**
- 3. But he also was to do this in other areas of his pastoral ministry in Ephesus as well.**
- 4. False doctrine was a primary concern of Paul in 2 Timothy, and Timothy was to guard the church from such corruption.**

#### **VI. Biblical preaching rebukes.**

##### **A. So, what is the difference between reproof and rebuke?**

- 1. Perhaps if reproof is refuting error and misconduct with careful biblical argument, then rebuke is bringing the erring person to repentance.**
- 2. So, reproof discloses the sinfulness of sin, whereas rebuke discloses the sinfulness of the sinner.**

##### **B. This highlights for us an often-neglected component of the gospel message.**

- 1. What we see throughout the NT is that the proper response to the gospel message is one of both repentance and belief.**
- 2. Many do not have a problem with belief.**

3. But repentance sounds harsh. We don't like to change.
4. I think that if we're honest, we would have to admit that we don't like reproof, and we certainly don't like to be rebuked.
5. But this is why it is so important for the preacher to be wed to the Scriptures. His reproof and rebuke must come from the Word of God. It must not be something he made up or based on his own personal preferences. It must be based on what God has said in His Word. So that the authority with which the rebuke is made is God's authority rather than man's authority.

## VII. Biblical preaching exhorts.

### A. The idea here is that of admonishing or encouraging.

1. Disobedient believers must be reprovved and rebuked.
2. But they must also be loved and encouraged toward spiritual change.
3. And isn't that what we all need in our lives as followers of Jesus? We need someone to come alongside us when we sin and offer a word of reproof or rebuke. But we also need a word of love and encouragement.
4. That's what God has done for us in Christ. He confronts us in our sin. But God also demonstrated His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

### B. Paul's ministry was certainly one of reprovving and rebuking, but it was also one of exhortation and encouragement.

1. That's biblical preaching.
2. Biblical preaching doesn't shy away from clarity regarding sin and the need for repentance.
3. But it also offers hope. The hope that is only found in Christ.
4. The gospel IS about how bad we are. But it is ALSO about how good God is.

## VIII. Biblical preaching is patient.

### A. The KJV says "longsuffering."

1. I like that because the preacher must be longsuffering to preach Sunday after Sunday, sometimes seeing little results or change.
2. Sometimes being faced with resistance and opposition.
3. Charles Simeon is a good example of a longsuffering preacher. When he first came to Holy Trinity Church in Cambridge, no one wanted him to be their pastor. The pews of the church had gates on them that could be locked to prevent people from sitting down. So, the pew holders locked the pew doors every Sunday morning. They refused to participate in corporate worship, and they prevented others from sitting down. That lasted for about 12 years! I can just tell you that I would have given up much earlier than that. But Simeon was patient. He stayed at the church for 54 years and eventually won the favor of many of the people. His patience paid off.

### B. But I think Paul's instruction to Timothy has more to do with Timothy's attitude toward the people entrusted to his care.

1. Some preachers are afraid to stand and reprove or rebuke on the authority of God's Word. Others forget that it must be done with patience.
2. It is fitting that the Bible uses the image of the shepherd for pastoral ministry.
3. The pastor must lead the people. He must be willing to lead in ways that the sheep do not find particularly appealing or comfortable. But he must do so with patience toward the sheep.

## IX. Biblical preaching is teaching.

### A. All preaching is teaching.

1. **Paul said in 3:16 that all Scripture is profitable for teaching. Scripture is profitable for training in righteousness.**
2. **The biblical preacher opens the Word of God and tells the people of God what it means.**
3. **In doing so, he is teaching the people what the Bible means, but he is also teaching the people how to read and study their Bibles.**
4. **So, biblical preaching is teaching.**

**B. But not all teaching is preaching. In fact, most teaching is not preaching.**

1. **Many of you were in Sunday School this morning. You were taught the Word of God.**
2. **But what distinguishes preaching from teaching?**
3. **John Piper says that preaching is expository exultation. Here's what he says about the prominence of preaching in worship: "The reason that preaching is so prominent in worship is that worship is not just understanding but also feeling. It is not just seeing God, but also savoring God. It is not just the response of the mind, but also of the heart. Therefore God has ordained that the form his Word should take in corporate worship is not just explanation to the mind and not just stimulation to the heart. Rather the Word of God is to come teaching the mind and reaching the heart; showing the truth of Christ and savoring the glory of Christ; expositing the Word of God and exulting in the God of the Word."**

**Conclusion:** A few years ago, I read a book called *The Awakening of Washington's Church*. It's a book about the congregation that was Falls Church, associated with the Episcopal Church USA, but is now Falls Church Anglican, no longer associated with the Episcopal Church USA.

The church was ultimately faced with an important decision regarding their commitment to the Word of God. Would they cave to the culture and a denomination gone astray? Or would they stand on the authority of God's Word?

Rector John Yates said, "The ultimate issue is one of authority—it is that of the lordship of Christ. *You call me teacher and Lord*, [Jesus] said, *and rightly so. For that is what I am*. We have no liberty to disobey or disagree with him. We bow to the authority and total trustworthiness of Scripture because we bow to the authority of Christ."

This commitment to the authority of Scripture set Falls Church on a collision course with the Episcopal Church USA. Falls Church sought to separate from the Episcopal Church amicably and initially thought that would be possible. But ultimately the Episcopal Church sued Falls Church. They kicked them out of their historic building where they had worshiped for centuries and where George Washington had been a member of the vestry. And they took all of their assets, including nearly \$3 million.

The story of Falls Church is a tremendous story. It's a story of faithfulness. It's a story of commitment to the authority of Scripture. Falls Church could have kept their building. They could have kept their money. But it would have required them to compromise the authority of the Word of God. And that they were unwilling to do. And while they lost everything, God has been faithful to His church, and the church is thriving today.

As I read the story of Falls Church, I was reminded that what we do here in this place is not about innovation. It's not about reinventing ourselves or reinventing the church. It's not about a changing culture with changing ideas about what is right and what is wrong.

It's about God and His Word. That's what we're about here at Goshen Baptist Church. We believe that the Bible is the Word of God. And we are committed to orienting our lives and this church around what God has revealed to us in His Word.

We live in a day when it might be said that sound doctrine is "out of season." That's okay. We'll keep preaching God's Word. We'll keep holding fast to the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. We'll keep submitting ourselves to the authority of Scripture. And we'll keep believing the promise of Jesus that He will build His church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.