**Fulfill Your Ministry**

2 Timothy 4:5

**I. Introduction:**

1. Express thanks for inviting me to labor in the gospel with the Westside church of Christ.

2. 2 This morning I want to talk about what you can and should expect from me as a gospel preacher/evangelist.

3. Like everything we consider as Christians we must look to God’s word for our guidance, because there are a great number of misconceptions about the duties and qualifications of an evangelist. (Not a “pastor”! Not the church “CEO”! Not the church “social coordinator”!)

4. 3 Paul wrote to Timothy *“But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”* (2 Tim. 4:5)

A. Please note two key phrases:

(1) *“do the work of an evangelist”*

(a) There is *work* that I need to do! *“the work of an evangelist”*

Vine: “a messenger of good,” denotes a “preacher of the gospel” Acts 21:8; Eph. 4:11.

Eph. 4:11-12: *“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ…”*

(b) Thus, I have a *responsibility*!

(c) A responsibility for which you need to hold me accountable!

(d) But, you must use scriptural criteria in determining whether I’ve fulfilled my responsibilities! Like everything we do as Christians I will expect you to judge my performance by using book, chapter and verse criteria; not man-made criteria!

(2) *“fulfill your ministry”*

(a) An evangelist is also a *minister*; same root word for “deacon,” the idea of one who performs a service.

(b) 4 This is the key to understanding the work of an evangelist. An evangelist performs “services,” he ministers (i.e., he serves, he is a servant):

* The word (doctrine)
* The brethren
* False teachers/false teaching
* Myself
* The Lost

(c) These services/ministries many times overlap and are not always neatly placed into separate categories. However, I think viewing the duties of an evangelist as falling into one of these categories is profitable for us as we study and consider these important matters.

(d) Let’s review the three epistles Paul wrote to evangelists (1 & 2 Timothy, Titus) so we provide a general overview of these responsibilities.

**II. Discussion:**

1. 5 **The Word** (or doctrine):

A. If I had to summarize in just a few words the responsibility of an evangelist I would use 2 Tim. 4:2: *“Preach the word!”*

(1) How important?

*“I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:* ***2*** *Preach the word!”* (2 Tim. 4:1-2)

6 You can’t get more serious than that! Why?

(a) 1 Tim 4:16: *“Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.”*

(b) Christianity is a *“taught”* religion (Jn. 6:45).

(c) Word is the *“power of God unto salvation”* (Rom. 10:17; 1:16-17).

(d) It is through His word that God reveals His mind/will (1 Cor. 1:21; 2:1-13).

(e) We will be judged by the word (Jn. 12:48: *He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him — the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.*).

(2) Thus, it only makes sense as we read 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus that we see the Holy Spirit making constant references to the duty of an evangelist to the word.

(a) 7 1 Tim. 4:13: *“Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.”*

(b) 1 Tim. 4:15-16: *“Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. 16 Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.”*

(c) So, the primary focus of an evangelist is gaining knowledge of God’s word and sharing that knowledge with others (brethren, alien sinner).

(3) 8 Note also that these epistles also place emphasis that an evangelist must be constantly alert that he is teaching *“sound doctrine”* and **all** the doctrine!

(a) 2 Tim. 1:13: *“Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.”*

(b) Titus 2:1: *“But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine:”*

(c) Titus 2:7-8: *“in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, 8 sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.”*

(d) 9 Must not leave off anything! Acts 20:26-27

B. 10 Following sound doctrine requires an evangelist to deal with **A LOT OF NEGATIVE THINGS!** (not popular in today’s PC culture!): people’s sins, false teaching,. Unloving? Absolutely not! Jn. 3:19-21

2 Tim. 1:13: *“Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.”* (cf. Eph. 4:15)

C. Is it loving to **not** warn people about sin? No! Ezek. 33:7-9

D. 11 It is just a fact of life that an evangelist will spend some measure of his time dealing with problems. It is an inescapable fact that a good portion of the New Testament is devoted to warning brethren about the dangers of falling away from *“sound doctrine”*!

2 Tim. 4:2-4: *“Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”*

E. This being the truth it is no wonder the constant exhortations Paul issued to Timothy and Titus:

2 Tim. 3:10-11: *“But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, 11 persecutions, afflictions”*

2 Tim 3:14: *“But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them,”*

F. 12 Hold my feet to the fire! Demand that I always teach *“sound doctrine”*!

(1) My salvation and your salvation depends on it! Jn. 17:17; 12:48

(2) Thus, with as much sincerity as I can muster I invite everyone to examine my teaching (Acts 17:11) and if I say anything you believe is contrary to God’s word, please, please bring that to my attention.

(3) But on the flip side; if I “step on your toes” by teaching the truth, please, please remember I am not your enemy (Gal. 4:16), I am your friend (Ezek. 33:7-9).

2. 13 **The Brethren:**

A. It actually surprised me that these three letters have much more to say about an evangelist’s responsibilities to the brethren as compared with preaching the gospel to the lost. Some of those responsibilities include:

(1) Exhorting the brethren to pray (1 Tim. 2:1, 8); includes praying for our political leaders!

(2) Proper conduct of women (1 Tim. 2:9-15; men are to take the lead in teaching/preaching, but women aren’t banished to absolute silence!).

(3) Appoint qualified elders (Titus 1:5-9; 1 Tim. 3:1-7).

(a) It should be the goal of every congregation to appoint qualified elders:

Titus 1:5: *“For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you”*

(b) Not something an evangelists does without input from congregation.

(c) Primary role is helping members understand the qualifications.

(4) Teach/instruct the brethren:

Titus 3:14: *“And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.”*

(5) 14 Responsibilities to various “classes” of brethren:

* Older men (1 Tim. 5:1; Titus 2:2),
* Younger men (1 Tim. 5:1; Titus 2:6),
* Older women (1 Tim. 5:2; Titus 2:3),
* Younger women (1 Tim. 5:2; Titus 2:4-5),

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* Widows (1 Tim. 5:3-16),
* Bond servants (1 Tim. 6:1-2; Titus 2:9-10),
* The rich (1 Tim. 6:6-10, 17-19),
* Elders (1 Tim. 5:3-16).

(6) 16 When dealing with the brethren it is essential that an evangelist:

* Be impartial (1 Tim. 5:21),
* Not act hastily (1 Tim. 5:22),
* Be open and honest (1 Tim. 5:22).

1 Tim. 5:21-22: *I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality. 22 Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure.*)

B. 17 An evangelist is one who is constantly in a teaching mode insofar as the brethren are concerned:

(1) Repetition is the “mother of learning”: 2 Tim. 2:14: *“Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers.”* (2 Pet. 2:13).

Titus 3:1-3: *“Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, 2 to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men. 3 For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.”*

Titus 3:8: *“This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.”*

(2) Ensure doctrinal integrity and continuity: 2 Tim. 2:2: *“And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”* (*Must do my best to ensure the next generation inherits a faithful church!*)

C. An evangelist must be patient and humble toward all:

2 Tim 2:24-26: *“And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, 25 in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, 26 and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.”*

This is especially important! An evangelist is not the boss, or “above” anyone! The *“word”* is the boss and an evangelist does not wield it as a club! Recall 2 Tim. 4:2: *“Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.”* (cf. 2 Cor. 5:10-11)

D. 18 An *“example”* to the brethren:

1 Tim 4:12: *“Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”*

Titus 2:7-8: *“in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, 8 sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.”*

Anyone taking up gospel preaching needs to understand he will receive much greater scrutiny than other Christians. Right or wrong? Jas. 3:1 Pray for me!

E. No “namby pamby” preaching: true gospel preaching is direct, substantive, authoritativ*e* and easily understood.

1 Tim. 1:3: *“…remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine,”*

1 Tim 5:7: *“And these things command…”*

1 Tim. 6:2: *“Teach and exhort these things.”*

2 Tim 4:2: *“Be ready in season and out of season.”*

Titus 2:11-15: *“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.”*

15 *“Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.”*

Titus 3:8: *“This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.”*

(1) At the end of a sermon the audience should not be left wondering what the truth is (Neh. 8:8; 1 Cor. 14:8).

(2) Cannot let false doctrine go unchallenged and plainly denounced (Jn. 10:12).

(3) This authority does not emanate from the man, but from *“the word”*! 1 Cor. 14:37

3. 19 **False Teaching/False Teachers:**

A. The very first instruction Paul gave Timothy regarded dealing with false teaching!

1 Tim 1:3-4: *“…remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, 4 nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies,”*

B. 20 Error can come from “without” or from “within”:

Acts 20:28-31: *“Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. 31 Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.”*

C. 21 An evangelist must constantly teach and warn the brethren concerning false teachers and false teaching:

1 Tim 4:1-7: *“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, 3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. 4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; 5 for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.*

*If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed. 7 But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness.”*

D. 22 Those unwilling to follow sound doctrine must be *“marked,” “noted,”* and *“avoided,”* and *“withdrawn from”:*

1 Tim. 6:3-5: *“If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, 4 he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, 5 useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.”*

2 Tim. 3:5: *“…from such people turn away!”*

(1) In other words, an evangelist is always on the “front lines” looking for and engaging the enemies of truth (which are legion!). Ezek. 33:7-9; Jn. 10:12-13

(2) Can’t sweep error under the rug and think it’s been dealt with! There is a time for study and consideration of differing points of view (2 Tim. 2:16; Titus 3:9-10).

(3) When circumstances warrant it even involves “naming names” (1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 1:15; 2:17; 4:9, 14).

4. 23 **Himself:**

A. There are certain things an evangelist owes to himself and if he can’t summon the energy and courage to provide these things he should not go into preaching!

(1) Spiritual diligence, strength and stamina: 2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Tim. 1:18-19

(2) Must exercise extreme care not to succumb to “battle fatigue”! 1 Tim 6:12: *“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life,”*

(3) Many quite “famous” preachers compromised the truth in their later years (e.g., Alexander Campbell, Foy Wallace, Homer Hailey).

B. Must summon every ounce of your courage! 1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 1:5-8

C. Must be totally devoted to the task at hand regardless of what obstacles stand in the way; play by the rules and be ever watchful! 2 Tim. 4:5

2 Tim 2:1-6: *“You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. 3 You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 4 No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. 5 And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. 6 The hardworking farmer must be first to partake of the crops.”*

2 Tim. 4:5: *“But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”*

D. Why?

1 Tim 4:16: *“Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.”* (cf. Ezek. 33:7-9)

5. 24 **The Lost:**

A. It is remarkable to me that in all three letters (1 & 2 Timothy and Titus) there is really only one direct reference to the lost (alien sinner):

1 Tim. 2:4: *“who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth”*

B. But that reference is a “tall order”: *“all men”*; so there is no doubt that every evangelist must be involved in reaching the lost with the gospel.

C. Every generation has the obligation to take forth the “Great Commission” (Mk. 16:15-16).

D. 25 However, must be careful that the needs of the brethren are not sacrificed in the name of reaching the lost (numerical growth just for the sake of “numbers,” is a recipe for disaster!).

E. I have some experience in teaching the lost; I think I know what works and what doesn’t work. But, I am willing to try any scriptural method to reach the lost! I hope every member of this congregation is also actively involved in reaching the lost!

(1) Success rate goes up enormously if you already have a personal relationship with the candidate! Matt. 5:14-16

(2) The *“power of God unto salvation”* is in the gospel message, not some “program.” Rom. 1:16-17 When brethren really come to an understanding and appreciation of what is at stake don’t need “programs”! 2 Cor. 5:10-11

(3) Worst thing we can do is try to make the gospel message “palatable.” Jn. 16:8; Acts; Acts 2:36 (*“cut to the heart”*); Ezek. 33:7-9

(4) Preach to make “Christians” (Acts 11:26) not *“members of the Church of Christ”*! Matt. 23:15

**III. Conclusion:**

1. 26 As we bring this lesson to a close I hope all of us have a clearly picture of what the scriptures require of me as a gospel preacher/evangelist.

2. I pledge to you that I will do my level best to *“do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry”* (2 Tim. 4:5).

3. However, I recognize that I cannot achieve that goal without your help. Therefore, I ask you to:

A. Pray for me (and for my family).

B. Be a Berean! Acts 17:11

(a) If there is something I say that you believe is not in agreement with God’s word…please, please, please bring that to my attention!

(b) Feel free to offer constructive criticism at any time.

C. Please, as you listen to my preaching make the application to yourself; 2 Cor. 13:5 (don’t sit there thinking, “I hope old so and so is paying attention to this sermon!”)

D. Feel free at any time to ask me any Bible questions you might have. I cannot guarantee I’ll give an immediate answer, but I do guarantee I’ll do my best to find a scriptural answer.

E. I am more than willing to privately study the Bible with you; I am more than willing to help you study with a non-Christian at any time and any place.

F. Please, hold up my hands! Ex. 17:8-13

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*“The word of God must be our pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night; we move when it moves, and stop when it stops.”* **J.W. McGarvey**