

**2 Timothy 4: 1-5; “Your Attendance upon the Preaching” (Part 2),
Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on March 20th, 2011,
in the Morning Worship Service.**

As I began to preach to you last Sunday upon this blessed subject; this very important subject of your attendance upon the preaching of the Word of God; let me review for a moment, where we have been. I opened up the passage of 2 Timothy 3: 14-17 by saying that there were certain duties that Timothy, as an Evangelist was called to do. He was being called to remember the truth that Paul had taught him, and he was being exhorted by the Apostle to go on to do the duties of his office of a Pastor-Evangelist. In going about these duties he was to believe that God would help him and bless him, and then through his perseverance in those duties God would, according to His grace and purpose, eventually let him see real fruit for his labors if he was faithful to do what he was called to do. You and I, I said to you, who comprise this church are in a similar position as Paul and Timothy were, even if we are not called to the high level of responsibility of Apostles and Evangelists. We are a pastor and Christ's people who have been placed here together in this church in order to serve Christ and to learn together to do His will. The way that we learn what God's will is, is by regularly feeding upon His Word, and putting it into practice in our lives. The major way that we feed upon the Word is not our personal Bible study and prayer at home; as important as this is. The major way that God has ordained for you to grow as a Christian, in relation to the Word of God, is by voluntarily coming and placing yourself under the preaching of the Word as it is delivered to you by God's appointed messenger; the pastor-teacher. He is a gift to you in the church that you regularly attend. He is there to equip you. There is a weighty importance in coming to church; coming to all the services of the church that you can; and being there week by week. It is that you would grow strong in the truth, and be led on to hold sound doctrine and do good works, on the basis of the Word preached. My proposition to you last Sunday, I can state in the form of a question. How can you learn what God's will is, and how can you know how you should conduct yourself both in the church, and in the world, as a believer in Jesus Christ, if you do not regularly attend upon the preaching of the Word? It will be very hard indeed, to grow strong and do much of anything for Christ unless you submit to God speaking to you in this way of preaching. The text that we are looking at this morning goes one step further. It is asking you and I, “What will we do if others turn away from regular attendance upon the preaching of the word? It is a very thought-provoking question. What I want to do this morning is to take this text and to apply it to you who are the hearers of the Word, so that you will joyfully take up, and persevere in, this duty to which Christ has called you, of regularly attending the services of worship. We want to look first at the urgency of the charge given to Timothy and to all you who come to listen. Then we want to look at the urgent personal reason

we should heed this charge. And then finally we want to look at the urgent corporate reason that we should heed this charge.

1st of all – Let’s look together at the urgency of the charge given to Timothy and to all you who come to listen. (verse 1a and 2)

“I charge you therefore....preach the word!” “Be ready in season and out of season.” “Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.” The charge from Paul to Timothy is to preach the word. There is a great urgency in his words. The charge is that he would not give up preaching the gospel and the word of God, just because he is not seeing the results that he would like to see. For an established church like our own, the charge to me is the same; to keep preaching to you, and not neglect or give up on this blessed means whereby God does His work. The charge for you who are here today is to deliberately and joyfully devote yourselves to come and hear the preaching of the word. If there is going to be someone here who preaches the word, you ought to be here when that word is spoken. As I said to you last week, one 15 to 20 minute sermon will not make for Christians who want to be strong in doctrine. You will say to me, “Well I leave all that doctrinal stuff to my pastor and my elders. I don’t worry about that too much.” Well, you should. Because if you were to think about Christ’s body, the church, and you were to think about sound doctrine in relation to it; you would see that sound doctrine is to be compared to the skeleton; it is the bones of the Christian life. You and I together are the body of Christ in this church. We are a local church representation of the larger universal body of Christ. But a body cannot stand, or walk, or run, without good healthy bones. That is what sound doctrine is. And you are a part of the body of Christ here in this place. You, by your participation in hearing and heeding the preaching of the word, is what gives strength to this church. You will say to me again, “See, there it is; the pastors and elders of the church are the skeleton. They take care of the doctrinal matters of truth; I do not need to learn them or grow in them.” “I just accept them, whatever they are.” Whoa! Whoa! The problem with taking that view of my illustration is that the elders are not bones which hold the body up, they are part of the eyes and the mouth of the body of Christ. They speak from the mind of Christ, which is His word; they watch over the spiritual well-being of the body. You who come and hear the preached word and go about to do it are the flesh and all the other parts of the body connected to the bones. Think of Ephesians Chapter 5 and verse 30. “For we are members of Christ’s body, of His flesh and of His bones.” That is; we who believe and are united to this church have Christ’s life within us, and we are all upheld spiritually as a body by the doctrinal truths of His word.

And then turn over to Ephesians Chapter 4, and verse 14. Here you find the following: “Therefore we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the Head—Christ—from whom the whole body joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by

which every part does its share, causes the growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” You see here that you who come and hear the good preaching of the word of God and heed it are compared to tendons and ligaments and muscles which are all connected by bones and held together by joints. In other words, you take the good teaching and doctrine of the word of God as it is preached to you, and you make up the connections in truth with other believers in the body, having been strengthened and motivated by the truth to do your share to build up the body by loving attitudes and actions and good deeds. That is what makes the church strong. That is what makes people in it more mature. They are abiding in the preaching and teaching of sound doctrine. This is what we find confirmed for us in the history of the early Church. In Acts Chapter 2, verses 14 and following, the Apostle Peter preaches a sermon on the day of Pentecost, after the Holy Spirit had been given to the Church. He refuted the idea that those men were drunk who had received the Spirit and were speaking in tongues. He then preached Jesus to the thousands gathered there that day. He brought those to conviction of sin by explaining that they had crucified the Lord of Glory, who had been raised from the dead by God the Father. He tells them that what they were seeing in the men who were speaking in tongues was a manifestation of Christ’s Holy Spirit being poured out for their benefit so that they too might come to know the Lord and be saved from their sins. And then when they are pricked in their hearts, they say to him, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” And Peter said to them, “Repent and let every one of you be baptized for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the Holy Spirit.” “For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.” “And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, ‘Be saved from this perverse generation.’” And then it continues on with these wonderful words. “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostle’s doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

This is the way that Christians like you and I are also to view our commitment to a local church in coming to place ourselves under the teaching of the word of God, and joining the church that we attend, and becoming useful members of the Body of Christ. We come, we gather regularly, we believe the gospel, we are baptized, and we join the church. And then we continue to come and sit under the word of God. We do that because it is what God would have us to do. We do it because God has spoken to our heart and He speaks to our mind and heart through this means. We do not do it because the pastor has forced us to these conclusions. We do it because God has given us a new heart through the preaching of the word and the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, and then we have the desire to be instructed in righteousness, to be reproved where we need it; to be corrected in our thinking where we need it. We want ultimately to be better equipped to love and serve our God, and that is what attendance upon the preaching of the word, accompanied by the Spirit’s power does. This is why, by the

way, that there are three other activities that should accompany the preaching of the word in the church that you attend. They are the fellowship of the saints, the observance of the Lord's Supper and meals together, and prayers. When you are engaging in those activities you are strengthening the body and enhancing the good effects of the truth that you have heard; realizing that God has not placed you by yourself; to live by yourself and for yourself. He intends for you to be in a local body of believers. It is not as though God cannot minister to a person alone and by themselves, but it is not His will long-term that you stay outside of any church.

And this leads us to our 2nd point – There is an urgent personal reason why you and I should heed this charge.

Paul says, "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: Preach the Word! Let me tell you the experience of my dear father. When my dad was converted to Jesus Christ back in May of 1970 we were in a liberal Presbyterian Church at the time. There was preaching of the word which was going on but it was very weak in sound doctrine. There was no real Biblical depth to it. We were not learning the truths of the gospel or the great doctrines of the Bible. The depravity of our hearts was not being addressed. The fall of man was not related in the preaching. Our being sinners under the wrath of God was not being made known to us. Our need of conversion to Christ was not being proclaimed. Christ and His perfect obedience to God and to His law as the basis of our justification was not spoken of. The duty of our exercising faith in Christ was mentioned, but we did not understand our urgent need to come to Christ for the grace that we would need to be saved and to live the Christian life. Our souls were not being saved or fed with the depths of the word of God. When the Lord was pleased to bring my dad to himself it was by reading Charles Haddon Spurgeon sermons. My dad had read in a Christianity Today magazine which his brother Maury had sent him, about how Pilgrim Publications was undertaking the monumental task of republishing Charles Spurgeon's sermons. He read the excerpts of those sermons which were given in the magazine and he really liked what he was hearing. Speaking spoke of truth not in shades of grey, but absolute and in black and white. In about the 10th sermon that he read, "*None but Jesus*" (*the first part*) he read the words of Spurgeon describing for the thousandth time the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ. He said, "God is just, he must punish sin; God is merciful, he wills to pardon those who believe in Jesus." "How is this to be done?" "How can he be just and exact the penalty, --merciful and accept the sinner?" "He doeth it thus: He taketh the sins of his people and actually lifteth them up from off his people to Christ, so that they stand as innocent as though they had never sinned, and Christ is looked upon by God as though he had been all the sinners in the world rolled into one." "The sin of his people was taken from their persons, and really and actually, not typically and metaphorically, but really and actually laid on Christ." "Then God came forth with his fiery sword to meet the sinner and to punish him." "He met Christ." He was instantaneously converted, and

everything in his life changed. What was it that saved his soul and changed his life? It was the preaching of the word of God, written down in shorthand by Spurgeon's secretary and written down in a book for him to read over a hundred years later. It was preaching that did that gracious work.

My mother and we children did not understand what had happened to him. We thought that he had lost his mind. He immediately began to pray for our conversion. But we did not want to be converted. My dear mother did not like his reading the Bible and praying upstairs, so he took to the basement and set up shop down there with two card tables where he would sit in a rocker and read Spurgeon sermons and books that Spurgeon recommended. And he put a prayer cushion on the concrete floor behind the furnace and there he would kneel every morning at around 4:30 a.m. praying for all of his loved ones. He did not know where to go to church and he did not want to go to a church where the Bible truth was not being preached in all its fullness. So he stayed outside of any church for 3 years. But he grew strong during that time spiritually. Why? Because he took Spurgeon as his pastor and sat under his preaching of the word until he could find the right church to go to; and he ended up reading over a thousand Spurgeon sermons. He was being built up because he was under the stated ministry of a pastor. How much better it can be when the pastor is living rather than dead. But he that is dead, still speaks. This is just the point that I am making. You will grow strong; you will grow up in Christ; you will become a useful servant to your Master if you will attend upon the preaching of the Word. But if you do not, you will not. And I am speaking to you now about the expository preaching of the Word of God. Many people may attend church where for sermons they will tell you entertaining stories, and fill you up with the quotes of men's wisdom and men's knowledge and men's observations upon life. That is not true preaching. True preaching is when a man stands before you and declares the Word of God; having studied it; having exegeted the passage if possible; having understood what the text is saying; he then delivers the truth of it, and makes application of that truth to all his hearers. That is how God comes to speak to you from His word the Bible. Good preaching is not just the man who delivers the Word; it is God using the words of that man; alighting on those words, and penetrating the heart and the mind with them to accomplish His will and purpose by the power of the Holy Spirit.

But there is an urgent personal reason that is given to Timothy and given to each one of us here this morning as to why the preacher should preach and why the people should continue to come and sit under his preaching. God is going to judge the living and the dead when Christ appears. Sitting under preaching which is faithful to the word of God will not skirt the judgment that is coming. Each person and each Christian will be judged by God. And they will be judged based upon what they have done with the truth that was given to them in the preaching of the word of God. Christ is coming again for His people, and to judge the world, and to bring in the next stage of His kingdom. The Lord Jesus will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom. No one will miss this great event.

All people will be raised from the dead at the same time. But there will be a vastly different outcome and end for those who have not received the word of the gospel and have rejected the word of truth; the Bible. Now is the day of salvation; now is the acceptable time to receive Christ. Now is the time to sit under, to hear, to heed, and to become doers of the word of God. Now is the time to repent, for as it says in Acts 17, for God has fixed a day in which He will judge the world through a man whom He has appointed; having furnished proof by raising Him from the dead. All the efforts of men to preach the gospel and to sow the good seed of the word of God will be made manifest on that glorious day. And all of the responses to that preached word will also be evaluated in the day of judgment.

Turn with me to John Chapter 12, verse 46. Many of the rulers in Israel were believing in Jesus, but they were afraid to confess Him lest they should be put out of the synagogue. They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God, it says in verse 43. But Jesus says here, “I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.” “And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.” “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.” That is what will judge men and women in the last day, the day when Christ appears; it will be the word. It will be the word that Jesus spoke to His Apostles, and which they by the Holy Spirit wrote down and which we hold in our hands now. Jesus did not come into the world to judge, but to save. But if you will not be saved, you will be judged. And if you are not a Christian you will perish in your sins and end up in hell. But if you are a Christian, you will also be judged, but it will be with an entirely different kind of judgment. There is no condemnation for the one trusting in Jesus, but there will be an evaluation. Turn with me over to 2 Corinthians 5, verse 8. Paul is here speaking about the time of our death as a Christian. And he says in verse 8 – “We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.” “Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.” “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”

Now what Paul is speaking about is not a judgment by the Lord which will punish the true Christian for the things which he has done which are bad. The things which he has done which are bad, recorded in his bodily deeds, and known by the Lord who is the continual examiner of his heart and actions; these the Lord will not remember or punish because of their faith in the death of the Lord Jesus. But they will factor in to the kind of reward that he or she will be given in that Day. If you, as a Christian, have done many good deeds you will be rewarded accordingly; be given a reward which the Lord which will be fitting to all that you have done for Him, to please Him. If you are a good tree, that is if you have truly been changed by the grace of Christ, you will bring forth spiritual fruit, and your reward will be commensurate to that. Those who are bad trees, those who have

not been changed by Christ's grace, bringing forth bad deeds, shall be punished in hell in proportion to the evil things that they have done. It will be hell for all who will not have Jesus to save them, but there will be degrees of punishment there in proportion to the evil of their deeds. This is why it says in verse 13, "Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well-known in your consciences." It will all be glory in heaven, but there will be rewards given in proportion to our works. For some who are persecuted and maligned now, Jesus says, "Great will their reward in heaven be then." But all good works are only those works which are found commanded in the word of God. And thus it is important that we sit under good preaching and teaching which will tell us what good works really are. The urgent personal reason that we should place ourselves under the preaching of the word of God on a regular basis is that there is a judgment coming for every person when the Lord appears. He will appear once at the end of the age and will judge all men. "So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many." "To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation." The time you sit under the preaching of God will be time well-spent for all the issues of life that you will have to deal with, and all the duties of things which God would have you to do, will be made known over time. And; God will be worshiped in the way that He has commanded. God will be glorified in those who live in this way.

And then finally – There is a very urgent corporate reason why we should heed this charge. (verses 2-5)

Preach the word!" "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; and they will turn their ears away from the truth and be turned to fables." Paul was speaking to Timothy about this happening in his day. But it could happen just as easily in ours. A time could come in this church that some of you might think that you have heard enough of the depths of God's word. Surely, you might say to yourself, Christianity is more than preaching. And so it is. It is living out what you have heard preached, and it is abiding in that good preaching and sound doctrine of the word. And you do that because you know that it is doing a great and good work in your soul to keep you in the good way and the paths of the Lord. I urge you to persevere in this good work of placing yourself under the preaching of the word. Pray to grow in your appreciation of it. I believe that true believers who are walking in the Spirit, and walking closely with the Lord, will never tire of good preaching. But sometimes we need to be encouraged to continue on, when we feel like quitting. What would have happened if Timothy would have given up preaching because he wasn't seeing the people listen to him any more? Much would have been lost to the churches of that day. Souls may have been lost. But the grace of God kept him from that, through his believing this word of Paul to him. Paul warned him that a time was coming where a number who professed to know Christ would not endure sound doctrine and they would heap up teachers to themselves to fill up the place

which the word of God should have occupied in their time and in their heart. He didn't tell Timothy to give up preaching and devise other means to win people to Christ. He said, "Preach the word". And do it in season, that is when many show that they are for good preaching, and do it out of season; that is, when many do not want to hear it any more. He said to Timothy "preach it", because it is God's means, and nothing can take its place. Ask yourself if you can affirm this now in your heart? Can you make this commitment in your heart? I will continue to place myself under the preaching of the word of God, because this is God's means to my being spiritually safe, and spiritually strong, as a Christian.

In closing, let me say this. I believe with all my heart, that the best preaching is the preaching of Christ in relation to all the sound doctrines of the Bible. 1 Corinthians 1: 30 says this: "But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption." Christ is vitally related to all of those doctrines. Christ is the living Word of God. Hebrews Chapter 4 and verse 12 says, "For the word of God (we usually think of this as the written word, accompanied by the Spirit's searching power) is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give an account." But these verses are speaking of Christ himself. And they are speaking of Him in the way that He searches your heart to know your response to His word preached. And so let me ask you now; what if you come to the place where you can no longer endure sound doctrine? What a sad day that will be. Will you leave this church and search for something else than the word of God being preached? You know that there was a time in the ministry of the Lord Jesus when he had declared to the multitudes that He was the bread of life. And He said that if they didn't eat His flesh and drink His blood that they would have no life in themselves. And it says in verse 66 of Chapter 6, "From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more." How very sad this was. They didn't stay and try to work things through with the Savior of the World. "Then Jesus said to the twelve, 'do you also want to go away?'" "But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord to whom shall we go?" "You have the words of eternal life." Ah, my friends, that is why they placed themselves under the preaching and teaching of His word. They were words of eternal life. Let us continue to do the same for the Bible is the word of life. Let us pray for more of the Spirit's power to come upon us, pastor and people, that we might come to know Christ better and follow Him more closely.